



The REHAB DECADE 2030 declared by WHO has moved rehabilitation in the forefront as the health strategy in attaining the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of ensuring healthy lives and wellness. The Department of Rehabilitation Medicine has heeded this call for action.

One proof is the Departments' increasing and stronger Multi-Disciplinary Collaboration with the other specialties of the Philippine General Hospital.

With such collaborations, the Department has actively been involved in the development and revisions of clinical pathways and programs for the delivery of health care services.

One of these is the DECT (Diabetic Extremity Care Team) pathway wherein patients even at the Emergency Room level are already referred for rehabilitation. Improved outcomes have been noted such as the prevention of amputations that usually result from diabetic foot ulcers.

In the FLS (Fracture Liaison Service) program involving the Department of Orthopedics, the Division of Geriatrics, the Division of Endocrinology of the Department of Medicine, patients are already made to undergo rehabilitation prior to any surgical procedure which in turn leads to early mobilization in patients with fragility fractures. Studies have shown that with such a program, the hospital stay of the patients are shortened.

For the CARE (Comprehensive Ambulatory Respiratory Rehabilitation) program, additional safety nets were included. A screening tool that determines readiness for inclusion into the program have identified patients who may be at risk for falls. Patients with other problems that could affect the outcomes being measured are evaluated and managed. One example is a patient with a painful arthritic knee joint that could affect the 6-minute walk test.

The Department has likewise started the CORE (Collaborative Cardiac Rehabilitation) program together with the Division of Cardiology of the Department of Medicine, and in this journey, careful planning included goal setting, identification of roles and tasks, and pathway of care among others.

Our partnership with the community of Bugias, Benguet with the assistance of PAHINUNGOD exemplifies collaboration beyond the walls of the hospital.

As a result of these Multi-Disciplinary Collaborative efforts, researches were done and these helped improve various patient care programs and protocols. Some examples include the DECT PATHWAY and the FLS PROGRAM.

The road to success of Multi-Disciplinary Collaborations entails good communication and coordination. Advancements in technology have likewise enabled teams to be connected thru more regular meetings and huddles. Mutual trust and transparency promote an attitude of openness and willingness to listen to ideas of others and the sharing of knowledge and experiences by the team members. Moreover, it requires accountability of its members.

The culture of multidisciplinary collaboration in Rehabilitation must be fostered since its essence after all is to be united in achieving a healthier and better life for our patients.

Sharon D. Ignacio, MD

*Chair, Department of Rehabilitation Medicine
College of Medicine and Philippine General Hospital
University of the Philippines Manila*