

A hundred years of hospital-based health care services

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This year, the Southern Philippines Medical Center (SPMC) is celebrating its centennial as a hospital. What is now SPMC used to be called Davao Hospital in 1917.¹ It started as the provincial hospital of Davao Province—or today's Region XI (Davao Region)—under the supervision of Dr JD Long, the Bureau of Health (BOH) director at that time.² At 100 years old, SPMC is the oldest government-owned hospital in Davao Region.

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Article editor

Jesse Jay Baula

Received

18 August 2016

Accepted

31 August 2016

Published online

19 July 2017

Cite as

Concha AS. A hundred years of hospital-based health care services. *SPMC J Health Care Serv.* 2017;3(1):9.
<http://n2t.net/ark:/76951/jhcs23b7xd>

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In 1917, before the actual construction of the first structures of Davao Hospital, Dr Long wrote in the Foreword of the BOH Bulletin on 'Provincial hospitals - Their construction and management':

"While the first and principal duty of a health service is to prevent the appearance and spread of disease, rather than attempt its cure after having appeared, it is recognized that, until the public is educated to the point that disease can be prevented or eradicated in its incipiency, all reasonable means must be used to cure those who are suffering, for two reasons: (1) To save the life of the individual, if possible, and (2) to instruct the individual and his(/her) family so far as may be possible, during illness or convalescence, in preventive measures for his(/her) own and his(/her) family's future protection."³

A century ago, Dr Long articulated the health care principles that we still follow today: that hospital services do not only involve diagnostics and therapeutics to save lives or restore health; communicating health information through patient and public education is also an essential component of health care services that helps prevent illnesses and curb health problems.

SPMC's latest iteration of its vision statement reads: "A world-class, service-oriented medical center" (AWSOM Center). A hundred years after the establishment of this former provincial hospital, SPMC is facing challenges that are way more complex than the standard diagnostics-therapeutics-education combination of health care service delivery. Today, it is the mission of SPMC to "provide accessible, equitable, holistic and responsive health care services;

produce outstanding, compassionate and competent health professionals through training and development; and engage in ethical and relevant researches to continuously improve the quality of health care."⁴ SPMC added new layers of relevant attributes of health care to enhance its diagnostic, therapeutic and health education commitments to the public.

An emerging area of concern in health care delivery involves the quality of the hospital's engagement with its clients. This relatively new service framework recognizes that patients, as clients of health care services, expect "better information, better processes and a better understanding of what they're getting for their money"^{5 6} The framework puts the 'patient experience revolution' at the centerpiece of its policy-making and operations design considerations.^{6 7} This emphasis on having a better health care experience is happening because there is now a wide range of health care choices (think lying-in clinics, dialysis centers, diagnostic centers, ambulatory surgery clinics, etc.), and many patients are willing to pay a premium to make their health care experience a little more convenient, more comfortable, or even pleasantly memorable. The availability of social media also helps feed this demand, by allowing easy comparison of choices of health care services and even easier viewing of crowdsourced feedback on such services. Several institutions elsewhere have invested a considerable amount of resources in improving the health care experience of patients.^{8 9} SPMC has also started deploying public assistance officers, health care navigators, and patient ward assistants to ensure better client engagement and to, indeed, provide better patient experience of health care.

With the way things are changing, it won't take another century until new paradigms of hospital services start to develop and demand appropriate responses. The steadfast service philosophy of SPMC will make this hospital live on for better than a hundred years more.

In this issue

In this SPMC Centennial Issue of the

SPMC Journal of Health Care Services, we give focus to an exploration of health care in the past in this part of the world. One article describes and illustrates the health care system of Davao Province in 1917, immediately prior to the establishment of Davao Hospital (Roño, 19-21). Another article retraces Davao Hospital's relevant legislations and official documents, the hospital's names through the years, and development of health care services beginning a hundred years ago (Ampog, et al., 26-32). A third article presents and discusses trends in the top causes of mortality and morbidity in the Philippines from 1960 to 2013 (Ladrero, et al., 22-25). Also in this issue, we republish a 90-year-old case report written by a former resident physician at Davao Public Hospital, another old name of SPMC (Belisario, 33-37). Along with this republication, we also publish some notes on its legal compliance (Timajo, 38), as well as a commentary on the health care services mentioned in the report, and the form and tone of writing of the article (Barinaga, 39-40). All these provide the contexts that at least partly explain how

we arrived at this particular moment of health care services in SPMC.

Article source

Submitted

Peer review

Internal

Competing interests

None declared

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