

Filipino Cancer Network of America-Michigan Chapter
By Remedios A. Solarte, MSN, RN

The Filipino Cancer Network of America-Michigan Chapter (FCNA-MI) was organized on December 29, 2014. It is a community-based outreach program under the auspices of the Philippine American Community Center of Michigan, an organization currently exempt under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The purpose is to provide cancer-related information, referral and support services to Filipinos and Filipino-Americans. It is a joint venture with the local American Cancer Society.

It all started with the invitation of Cherry Sloan-Medrano, BSN, RN, CCM, BC, OCN Chairperson, Philippine Nurses Association of America FCNA initiative. Every National Convention, she takes the time to present activities of the FCNA-Metro Houston that was organized in 2008. She would give out a Facilitator Handbook for Chapters to read and even gave free T-Shirts and Car plate holders. It took three years for the Michigan group to finally accept the challenge to start a chapter.

Planning started when Remy Solarte invited Dr. Cloty Sitchon to Co-Chair with her the FCNA-MI Chapter. There was enthusiasm and excitement that they scheduled a meeting two days before New Year's Day with Community representatives.

Two weeks later, the FilStar News, Michigan's Best Asian Newspaper in English published an article on the formation of the FCNA-MI. Below is an excerpt from the article:

Newly Formed Fil-Am Group to Provide Aid to Cancer Patients

"A Filipino-American volunteer group has been formed to provide assistance to cancer patients. Called the Filipino Cancer Network of America-Michigan Chapter (FCNA-MI), the community-based outreach group will provide cancer-related information, referral and support services to Filipinos and Filipino-Americans. Its program is a joint undertaking with the Michigan local American Cancer Society. Remedios Alvarez Solarte, the principal organizer, said FCNA is now recruiting members. Among the new members are top Filipino community leaders." (The Filipino Star News, Volume 6, No. 3, January 1-15, 2015)

VISION:

- A well established and thriving community-based program that collaborates with similar organizations dedicated to cancer prevention, support advocacy and care, specifically among Filipino-Americans diagnosed and afflicted with cancer.

MISSION:

- Provide assistance and support to individuals with cancer, and those who are survivors, as well as their families and caregivers
- Maintain and promote quality of life through education, networking and referrals
- Utilize effectively community resources

GOALS

- Facilitate formation of one or more Filipino cancer support groups in the Detroit Metropolitan area

- Provide educational activities addressing cultural/ethnic perceptions/myths about cancer in the Filipino community
- Disseminate information about the Filipino Cancer Network of America Michigan Chapter (FCNA-MI) to the Filipino American Community as well as to civic, professional and faith-based organizations and the local Filipino media.

Background Information on Filipinos in Michigan

Filipinos rank third among the Asian alone population that only reported one detailed Asian group with 2.6 million (US Census 2010). The Chinese rank first with 4.0 million, followed by Asian Indians 2.8 million.

The 2010 census figures also show that the number of Filipinos residing in Michigan now total 22,047, up 27 percent over 17,377 recorded in the 2000 census. In 1990, the Filipino population in Michigan was 13,786.

In Michigan, the estimated number of new cases for all cancer sites is 57,420 with a mortality of 20,920; female breast new cases is 7,780 with a mortality of 1,410; colorectal new cases 4,190 with a mortality of 1,670; lung and bronchus new cases 8,350 with a mortality of 6,010 and prostate new cases 8,110 with a mortality of 810 (T. Rich, Estimated Number of New Cases and Deaths by Select Cancers, 2013: Michigan).

Although Filipinos are the third largest Asian subgroup in the United States, it is difficult to find resources about their patterns of cancer incidence and mortality rates. In the Philippines, heart attack, stroke and cancer remain top causes of death among Filipinos (Department of Health, 2014).

Progress since Founding of the FCNA-MI:

Establishment of members of the Steering Committee

It started with 20 names suggested by those present at the first meeting: 7 Nurses, 4 Physicians, 2 Teachers, 2 Medical Technologists, 2 Business Persons, 1 Information Technologist, 1 Real Estate Broker and 1 Ex-Mayor

Review of Mission, Vision and Goals

This was ongoing.

Submission of Biosketch Using the Outline below

1. Short Biography: Province, Degree/College, Work Experience
2. Organizational Involvement/Activities
3. Awards/Achievements
4. Skills/Strengths you can contribute to FCNA-MI
5. Hopes/Dreams for the success of FCNA-MI

Skills/Strengths: Members of the FCNA-Steering Committee have over 1,000 years of combined experience in service to the community and to their professions. Following are comments of the members in their own words:

“I have 40years of clinical nursing practice in medical/surgical units. I had been a consistent recipient of the Sinai Hospital Honor Roll, a recognition award given by administration.”

“With the FCNA-MI, my people skills can be utilized to advance the goals and mission of the group. They say that I can talk to anyone without hesitation if needed. We had the blessing of taking care of someone we loved, and experienced the agony of losing someone right before your eyes. With the FCNA, I hope to be able to share some precious time helping others.”

“I am Goal oriented, family oriented, God loving, compassionate, kind and caring, good listener, task-oriented, reliable and dependable, and a good motivator. Overall, I feel these personal characteristics and previous experiences are assets that enabled and inspired me to join the steering committee of the FCNA-MI when invited to the first meeting.”

“As I always motivate the members of Kapulongan ng Katolikong Pilipino sa Michigan (KKPM), that as long as we consider ourselves as one string, bound together with common aspirations and goals, work together with the same passion, we will be strongly united to support the beam of our mission.”

“As a Nurse with many years of experience and with a specialty in Psychiatry, I will be able to provide support to our Filipino community.”

“As a physician of 50 years and a psychiatrist by training and practice for almost 40 years, I developed the art and skill of a comprehensive assessment and treatment planning for patients experiencing mental and behavioral health issues. This gives me an insight and sensitivity into the kind of issues that we can expect to deal with in our Filipino cancer patients. Coincidentally, I also learned to solicit funds for the Continuing Medical Education programs and Medical Mission projects. I believe I can be of help in raising funds for FCNA-MI .

“With the Filipino Cancer Network of America-Michigan (FCNA-MI) I can participate as a mentor in the project. I have taught Oncology Nursing both theory and clinical. I can also work with the support group in the Phase II of the initiative, teaching family members of cancer patients receiving therapy. For the past three years, I had been the nurse, caregiver, housekeeper, and the support of my husband who was diagnosed with cancer of the colon, stage three. He had surgery followed by chemotherapy, experiencing all the side effects of the drug that necessitated his admission every so often to the hospital. This was followed by another diagnosis of cancer of the prostate where he had to go for 44 external radiation therapies, the only modality of treatment recommended by his oncologist, considering all of his co-morbidities. Now, I have the chance to give back.”

“Being involved with several community organizations has afforded me to develop a network of supportive friends and acquaintances that I can tap for financial or manpower or even spiritual support.”

“I am dependable, productive, dedicated with honesty and integrity; I can assist with fundraising; some computer skills; Excellent people and customer service skills; Possesses a wealth of clinical knowledge; As a complex care coordinator, promotes healthy living, empowers the public for disease prevention and healthy lifestyle; May be able to assist in engaging person concerned/patient through self management support and education to improve health; May be able to assist in facilitating referrals to palliative care, hospice, and helping patient and family with end of life decision making when needed; Can provide resources for patient and family support, education, and remove barriers to care; As a hula dancer, an entertainer.”

Hopes and Dreams:

“I saw it as an opportunity to be of service to FCNA by sharing my precious time. My mother In-law died of cancer of the liver and pancreas in 1997. With my nursing experience taking care of cancer patients and taking care of my families who were afflicted, I see a great need for support among cancer patients who unfortunately succumb to cancer. Through FNCA, I can put my invaluable experience to good use.”

“The success of FCNA lies on the support and education provided to the Filipino community to assist them to understand and manage cancer.”

“When I was introduced to the idea of FCNA here in Michigan, I did not have second thoughts about wanting to be involved. As a physician and a member of a covenant charismatic community, I am well aware of Filipino friends or their families who have been touched by cancer. Cancer is an equal opportunity invader. My father died of pancreatic cancer. My husband’s two brothers died of liver cancer and inner ear cancer. I hope to use my skills and strength to contribute to the success of the FCNA-MI.”

“My hope and dream for the FCNA-MI is that it will serve as the conduit for identifying Filipinos and Filipino Americans who have cancer and to encourage them to seek early diagnosis and treatment for their cancer. One of our cultural traits is that we tend to keep the diagnosis of cancer to our selves until it is too late. I hope that the FCNA-MI will be able to break that trait, identify those patients and encourage them to go for treatments before it is too late. I also envision a long term goal of having this project published as a research study.”

“My hope for the success of FCNA is that patients and caregivers will have access to the resources, to the care and love that they need during this difficult time in their lives, and that they are not alone in this journey. Moreover, with the guidance of our Lord, our core group will continue to work together for the success of this noble cause.”

Development of a Questionnaire to identify Filipinos with Cancer

Unfortunately, the questionnaire did not reflect the purpose of eventually writing a research paper. So the questionnaire will need to be revised.

Completion and Approval of a Logo (Please see attached pictures).

T-Shirts for FCNA Members and for Sale

Ordered 100 T-Shirts and were on sale for \$15.00 each.

Meeting with American Cancer Society Representative

Met with American Cancer Society Representative twice and invited her to present on the Role of ACS as a Partner at our May 11, 2015 Meeting.

Mitzi Cardona
Health Systems Manager, Primary Care
Southeast Michigan Office, Lakeshore Division
20450 Civic Center Drive
Southfield, MI 48076

Topics Covered in the Presentation:

Philippines and ACS Partnerships:

Meet the Targets Final Report – 2014, a publication of the American Cancer Society Encouraging Country-Level Action to Make Cancer and Chronic Diseases a Global Priority, carries a two page description of the Philippines “ICANSERVE Foundation, Inc.” which was founded in 1999 by four breast cancer survivors. They provided information and support for women who were newly diagnosed, in treatment or in remission. In 2008, the mission was refined to focus on early detection of breast cancer.

Through the American Cancer Society (ACS) Meet the Targets grant, ICANSERVE was invited by Philippine Health Insurance (Philhealth) a government agency, to be part of its PreVents program. This program of Philhealth started in August 2014, where ICANSERVE has been accredited to be trainer for breast cancer screening.

A successful joint breast and cervical cancer screening event called Pink Positive was held in 2013 and repeated in 2014. The City of Taguig has pledged to put the first women’s cancer center in the country with new partners from the cities of Muntinlupa and Taguig City. All these were made possible through the ACS Meet the Targets grant in partnership with the Philhealth.

Tools for Health Care Professionals

Mitzi Cardona explained how to be certified for Cancer Survivorship Training online. As of this time only two members of the FCNA-MI Steering Committee are certified.

Cancer's Impact-

Psychological Impact of Cancer Diagnosis

Societal and Economic Impact

2015 HEALTH AND WELLNESS FAIR

1. FCNA –MI partnered with the Philippine Medical Association of Michigan for the 2015 Health and Wellness Fair.
2. Poster Board contained the description, Mission, Vision and Goals of FCNA and pictures during meetings, plus the Cancer Detection Guidelines for both Males and Females.
3. One table had all the handouts from American Cancer Society
4. One table had the display of foods for healthy eating
5. T-Shirt Sales was extensive at this time. There was a lot of support from the community that the purple color of the T-shirts became the color of the day.

The FCNA-Michigan, young as it is has proven to be a surviving organization. The newest person who is joining the group is Pastor Joey Magpantay from the Crossroad Christian Church, at 340 N. Main Street, Clawson, MI 48017. He will be participating as a Spiritual Advisor for our Support groups.

The task ahead is tremendous! The FCNA-MI team consists of a diverse group of leaders who have excellent work ethics, and are eager to share their talents for community service. They are guided by the **Lessons from the Geese** that *“People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.”*