

PhilHealth VII exceeds target Konsulta providers

By Harold Ballener, Public Affairs Unit, PRO VII

“Without commitment you cannot have depth in anything,” Neil Strauss once said.

This line echoes the devotion of the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) with the full roll out of its Konsulta Benefit Package. Being one of the prime movers in the implementation of RA 11223 or the Universal Health Care (UHC) Act, PhilHealth espouses expansion of the primary care benefit to provide members with access to preventive health care services.

PhilHealth, responsive in making programs and benefit packages to cater to the needs of its members, started the implementation of its primary care benefit in 2012. The benefit package, however, was limited to certain membership programs and their qualified dependents through government facilities such as Rural Health Units (RHU) and outpatient departments of government hospitals.

The drive toward full implementation of the UHC also hastened the enhancement of PhilHealth’s existing primary care benefit package, this time encompassing not just a portion of its contributing populace but reaching out to the rest of the population regardless of membership category.

Equipped and ready to dispense the primary care benefits to the Filipino people, accredited Konsulta Providers are increasingly becoming accessible - with a total of 103 accredited facilities spread out in the four island-provinces in Central Visayas. As of November 4, 2022, PhilHealth Region (PRO) VII has gone beyond its target 102 Konsulta facilities this year. Five more facilities are still on process. Mostly RHUs, these facilities can



Silverio and Bethel Amor

now render the Konsulta services in the region, and will serve as their initial point of contact before they seek higher level of care as the primary care provider sees fit.

Of these accredited Konsulta facilities in Region VII, worth mentioning is the Diagnostic Care and Laboratory Services (Diagcare). Situated in the heart of Dumaguete City, Diagcare is the first PhilHealth-accredited facility in Negros Oriental. The private facility also has the distinction of having the most beneficiaries who were able to avail of Konsulta services.

According to owner Daffodil Ramirez, their partnership with PhilHealth and knowledge of Konsulta services which she considers as extension of their services enabled them to easily embrace the Konsulta Package. *“Diagcare [was] already giving free services but limited in our own capacity, knowing the full details of the program, we were able to optimize our services because we can give free consultation, free laboratories and medicines, as well”,* she said

However, the way to accreditation was not an easy process for Diagcare. She added that they were also confronted with obstacles in complying with the requirements, which include engaging additional manpower and equipment, and the technicalities of the system coupled with needed capital outlays. Notwithstanding the hindrances they met during accreditation, Ramirez modestly declared that they were “very fast” in utilizing the eKonsulta system for not too long since its installation.

Electronic Konsulta (eKonsulta) is a PhilHealth developed web-based stand-alone application which may be used by the Konsulta facility as an interim electronic reporting system. This can be used for encoding of patient encounter data which include diagnosis, diagnostic tests done with corresponding results and prescribed or dispensed medicines.

As of late, Diagcare holds the record of being the accredited Konsulta facility with the most number of beneficiaries. PhilHealth has already paid for the services they have rendered to more than 1,700 individuals as of October 21, 2022.

“With the influx of registration, we were able to cope up. Thanks to my team, [who’s] very supportive and without them it won’t be possible. It’s all about teamwork,” Ramirez said.

Furthermore, she credits this feat not only to her team but also to the members who have welcomed the Konsulta program.

Through the Konsulta Package, members and their dependents should not go right away to the hospitals for initial medical evaluation. Instead, as a cost-efficient measure, they should be seen first by their Konsulta Provider where they could avail of care consultations, health screening and access to selected diagnostic services, and medicines.

Khalyl Lourdes Planea, a fresh graduate who availed of the Konsulta services at Diagcare revealed her impression of the PhilHealth program as “too good to be true,” for she always associated PhilHealth as an “aid [one gets] after [confinement].”

On the other hand, Joven Amarante, office clerk and a Konsulta beneficiary also shared his delight over Konsulta, saying it will surely “help the less fortunate, especially those who could not afford to pay for medicines.”



Daffodil Ramirez



Imelda A. Lintag



Joven K. Amarante



Khalyl Lourdes B. Planea

Couple Silverio and Bethel Amor, both senior citizens who also availed of the Konsulta, expressed their contentment on the package. *“Maayo kay naay [programa] nga makatabang namo bisan og ginagmay.”* (It’s good to know that there is a program that could help us even in small ways.)

Imelda Lintag, another beneficiary who availed of this program, noted that it is her hope that “PhilHealth would sustain and maintain the program” for more Filipinos to avail of its advantages.

The UHC guarantees progressive transformation in the Philippine health care system. With PhilHealth’s constant innovation and zeal to bring the best for the Filipinos in terms of financial access to health care services, the mandate of the UHC Law in ensuring equitable access to quality and affordable health care goods and services is now within the people’s reach. ###