



Philippine Medical Association

THEME: PMA KABALIKAT SA KALUSUGAN, KAUNLARAN AT MAAYOS NA KAPALIGIRAN

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MESSAGE FROM THE PHILIPPINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

The members of AMDA have alleviated the plight of the Filipinos living in several Visayan islands affected by the typhoon Haiyan, also called super-typhoon Yolanda in the Philippines. Their coordinated relief efforts reached places which were otherwise not given much attention by most relief missions, local and international.

Typhoon Yolanda hit many islands in central Philippines on November 8, 2014 leaving more than 6,000 people dead along its path. To-date there are still many lost bodies or persons to be found.

The devastation caused by the typhoon affected the people physically, emotionally, and spiritually. It destroyed most of their livelihood, their sources of income, and their houses. There was no food and water. Electricity and communication were cut off. The islands were isolated. The people suffered grimly.

The entire experience of strong typhoon, widespread devastation, and loss of lives and properties is unheard of in the country. And, this gives the citizens, the government, and the medical people something to ponder on. The country has not been prepared for such a great calamity. Will it ever be ready to face the strength of nature? Is this a universal attitude—that of not being prepared?

Medical groups, like the Philippine Medical Association, conduct missions and relief efforts in synchrony with various government agencies and other volunteer private organizations. PMA follows the four vital elements of Mission: 1) Relief goods distribution—immediate response; 2) Medical missions—immediate response; 3) Psychosocial counselling-facilitation—two to four weeks after disaster; and, 4) Rapid physical assessment of the disaster landscape—for the long-term response.

The AMDA relief efforts, though not big in magnitude, has followed similar pattern of PMA's large-scale medical missions. Coordinators came to the site of devastation and made careful rapid assessment. Logistics were prepared and the means of reaching the site were arranged. Then, their volunteer medical people and allied health-care personnel came. The calamity victims were then served.

The effects of relief efforts and medical missions are myriad. The victims are given food and water, clothings, and paraphernalia to keep them warm at night or safe from more rains. And, above everything, the mission gives the victims the feeling that they are not isolated and disregarded. Their belief in humane acts are restored. This is the essence of "Sogo-Fujo".