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*In conferring the PAFIOO Banaag Award to Elvy G. Barroso, the President recognizes her remarkable work in public health education on tuberculosis that significantly enhanced infection control practices and expanded access to treatment for Filipinos and other ethnic communities in New York City.*

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## *Elvy G. Barroso*

**United States of America**  
**Hometown: Ligao City, Albay**

**W**hen someone is dedicated to advocating for an issue, especially concerning health, it reflects their strong character and commitment to raising awareness about a critical public health challenge. This encapsulates Dr. Elvy G. Barroso's journey as a physician from the Philippines to the United States of America. Her unwavering advocacy is focused on addressing one of the most infectious diseases, tuberculosis (TB).

Dr. Barroso's life and career represent a remarkable journey of dedication, perseverance, and passion for public health. From her humble beginnings in Ligao City, Albay, to becoming a leader in tuberculosis control and prevention in New York City, her work has improved infection control practices and access to treatment for tuberculosis in Filipino and other ethnic communities.

### **Roots of Advocacy**

For Dr. Barroso, advocacy is not just a calling—it is woven into the very fabric of her being. Her journey into healthcare began in the Philippines, where she earned her Bachelor of Science in Pre-Medicine at the University of the East and her Doctor of Medicine at De La Salle University. She

worked as a medical specialist in the Department of Health in the Philippines, and her interest in infectious diseases, particularly tuberculosis, took root—a focus that would later define her career.

A thirst for knowledge and a deep-seated desire to make a difference propelled her to pursue advanced studies abroad. She obtained a Master of Science in Occupational Medicine from the National University of Singapore and a Diploma in Tuberculosis Control and Epidemiology from the Research Institute of Tuberculosis in Tokyo, Japan.

Her transition to the United States marked a new chapter in her personal and professional life. Dr. Barroso was well-equipped to take on the challenges ahead. What started as a move for better opportunities quickly evolved into a lifelong mission to combat one of the world's most persistent and deadly infectious diseases.

### **Champion for Tuberculosis Control**

In a city that boasts one of the most diverse populations in the world, the fight against tuberculosis in New York City (NYC) is a multifaceted challenge. This infectious disease

disproportionately affects immigrant communities, and it was within this space that Dr. Barroso found her calling. She continued her work as the Tuberculosis Program Coordinator at the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and later at the NYC Department of Health and Mental Health (DOHMH).

Since 1995, she has worked with the NYC DOHMH, advocating for healthcare training in the communities it serves. Her leadership has been instrumental in developing health education programs, training curricula, and infection control measures that have benefited thousands of residents across the city.

Her expertise in tuberculosis control has led her to roles with increasing responsibility in the DOHMH. She served as the Professional Development Coordinator and Outreach Team Lead. Dr. Barroso spearheaded the planning, design, and implementation of health educational initiatives aimed at curbing the spread of infectious diseases in at-risk populations. She worked closely with community organizations to conduct screenings and educational campaigns across New York City's boroughs. Her work has dramatically improved infection control practices and enhanced access to tuberculosis treatment for underserved ethnic communities in the area.

### **Empowering Communities**

A key component of Dr. Barroso's success has been her deep connection to the Filipino community in NYC, particularly in Queens, where large numbers of Filipino immigrants reside. Dr. Barroso has led efforts to educate Filipino nurses and the community about tuberculosis, its prevention, and treatment protocols.

Since 2016, in collaboration with the Philippine Nurses Association of New York, Inc. (PNANY) and the *Kalusugan* Coalition, she has conducted numerous health educational programs and tuberculosis screening aimed at tuberculosis surveillance. Arrangements for free evaluation and treatment were made for those who tested positive for tuberculosis. Her work has resulted in a decrease in tuberculosis cases among Filipinos in New York City from being ranked 4th in the city to now 8th in terms of cases.

Her outreach has also extended beyond the Filipino community. In 2023, she led tuberculosis screenings for Ukrainian refugees, partnering with the Ukrainian organization *Razom* to provide much-needed healthcare services.

Her response to health crises has not been limited to tuberculosis. During the pandemic, she played a role in evaluating COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness. In 2022, Dr. Barroso played a critical role as a medical epidemiologist during the monkeypox outbreak in NYC. Her ability to pivot quickly, assess the needs of the community, and implement targeted interventions underscores her versatility and her dedication to public health.

### **A Lifelong Learner and Educator**

Dr. Barroso's academic achievements are as impressive as her fieldwork. Her journey of continuous learning saw her earning a Ph.D. in Nursing from The Graduate Center, City University of New York, alongside a Master of Science in Nursing and a Master of Science in Public Health and Community Health Education from Hunter-Bellevue School of Nursing, City University of New York.

For Dr. Barroso, education is a two-way street. While she values her own learning, she is equally passionate about teaching others. As a professor of Nursing, she has taught at prestigious institutions, such as New York University, Hunter-Bellevue School of Nursing and Borough of Manhattan Community College, City University of New York. Her courses range from the fundamentals of nursing to leadership, ethics, health policy, community health nursing, psychiatry, and research. Through her mentorship, she has helped shape the next generation of healthcare professionals, many of whom are Filipino nursing students looking to carve out their own paths in the nursing field.

### **Recognitions and the Road Ahead**

Dr. Barroso's work has not gone unnoticed. In 2024, she was named one of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) TB Elimination Champions, a recognition that highlights her pivotal role in reducing tuberculosis cases and improving healthcare access in immigrant communities. Her accolades also include the Public Heroes Award from the Bureau of Tuberculosis Control, the 2020 Excellence in Community Service Award from the PNANY, and an Excellence Award in Research/Scientist from the Philippine Nurses Association of America (PNAA).

As a prolific researcher, Dr. Barroso has contributed to numerous publications in peer-reviewed journals. Her research in 2023, *Factors Associated with Household Contact, Tuberculosis Testing, and Evaluation*, was published in the Journal of Public Health Nursing. Her most recent research in 2024 on *Patient Navigator's Role in Latent Tuberculosis Infection at a New York City Health Department Chest Clinic* was published in the Journal of Clinical Tuberculosis and Other Mycobacterial Diseases. Her research continues to inform public health strategies not only in New York but also across the globe.

Despite her busy schedule, Dr. Barroso finds time to serve the Community Board Six as Chair of Health & Human Services Committee for 10 years. She also serves the Epiphany Church as a Lector and a Eucharistic Minister. She is also a member of the Seido World Karate Organization. She currently holds a Fourth Degree Black Belt.

Dr. Barroso's story is a testament to what one person can achieve with passion, persistence, and a deep-rooted commitment to community service. Her legacy will undoubtedly inspire future generations of healthcare professionals and advocates, not only in the fight against tuberculosis but in the broader mission of improving public health for all.