



In conferring the PAFIOO Pamana ng Pilipino Award upon Melvin J. Sanicas, the President recognizes his exemplary achievements as a renowned expert in global health, immunology, and preventive medicine that supported the world's response to COVID-19 and other infectious diseases.



Melvin J. Sanicas

Switzerland

Hometown: Bacolod City, Negros Occidental

In the world of global health, few names resonate as strongly as Dr. Melvin J. Sanicas. Born in 1981 in Iloilo City, his journey from a curious young student to an internationally recognized expert in vaccinology is nothing short of inspiring. With a dazzling array of academic achievements and professional milestones, Dr. Sanicas is not just shaping the future of medicine; he is redefining it.

Dr. Sanicas's academic odyssey began at the University of the Philippines - Manila, where he earned his bachelor's degree in Biology in 2001. His thirst for knowledge propelled him to pursue a Doctor of Medicine degree at the same institution, graduating in 2006 and passing the medical board exams with flying colors the following year. But for Dr. Sanicas, this was just the beginning.

His relentless pursuit of excellence led him to the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom, where he secured a Postgraduate Certificate in Patient Safety and Clinical Risk Management in 2008. Balancing work at a multinational drug company with further studies, he earned his Master of Science in Vaccinology and

Pharmaceutical Clinical Development in 2012, graduating *cum laude* and as valedictorian—an impressive feat that showcased his dedication and passion.

In a whirlwind of academic pursuits, he obtained a Master of Science in Infectious Diseases from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in 2015, followed by an Executive Certificate in Public Policy from Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government in 2020.

He continued to conquer new heights with a Diploma in Advanced Vaccinology from the University of Geneva in 2021 and a Diploma in Infectious Diseases from the *Institut Pasteur Paris* in 2023. He achieved his Master of Business Administration from the University of Leicester, United Kingdom, in 2023, demonstrating that his quest for knowledge knows no bounds.

Cancer Diagnostics and Vaccinology

At present, Dr. Sanicas serves as the International Medical Director for Screening at Exact Sciences, an international biotech company specializing in cancer diagnostics. His

work involves harnessing cutting-edge technologies for early cancer detection, where he expertly manages research, clinical studies, and medical activities. His role leverages cancer genomics and machine learning, paving the way for breakthroughs that can change lives.

Before joining Exact Sciences, Dr. Sanicas made significant contributions in leadership roles at prominent pharmaceutical and biotech companies. As the Senior Director of Medical Affairs and Clinical Development at Clover Biopharmaceuticals in Switzerland, he played a crucial role in the clinical development of a COVID-19 vaccine and a cell-culture influenza vaccine. His efforts in these projects are pivotal in combating the public health challenges posed by these diseases.

During his tenure at Takeda Pharmaceuticals International, he served as the Global Medical Director. There, he spearheaded the clinical development of a dengue vaccine while providing critical medical education on the virus and its preventative measures.

Further solidifying his status as a leading expert in infectious diseases and public health, he became the first Global Health Fellow from Asia at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the largest nonprofit foundation in the world committed to global health and development. At the Foundation, he launched the Collaboration for Tuberculosis Vaccine Discovery (CTVD), an international network of experts dedicated to tuberculosis vaccine research and development. The CTVD has been instrumental in accelerating the development of new tuberculosis vaccines, targeting one of the world's most formidable infectious disease killers long before the pandemic struck.

Dr. Sanicas brings a wealth of experience to his field, having held significant roles at prominent pharmaceutical and biotech companies, such as Sanofi Aventis, GlaxoSmithKline, Novartis Vaccines and Diagnostics, and Vifor Pharma Asia Pacific, where he was involved in clinical development, medical affairs, regulatory science, and capacity building. His diverse expertise positions him as a leader in the pharmaceutical industry.

Recognitions and Awards

Dr. Sanicas's impressive résumé is peppered with accolades. In 2021, he was conferred with The Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) Award for Science and Medicine—the only recipient for this category in its 65-year history. His contributions to global health have earned him recognition from the Senate of the Philippines, which celebrated him as an internationally respected COVID-19 expert.

His commitment to public health and extensive work during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly

the early research on the virus' transmissibility and vaccine development, has seen him participate in over 100 interviews and lectures worldwide, effectively combating misinformation and educating the public on critical health issues.

His pandemic-related animated TED-Ed videos have collectively garnered over 10 million views, making a significant impact in disseminating accurate information to a global audience. His book, *Frontiers of COVID-19*, has sold over 15,000 copies and is a valuable resource for medical professionals and researchers alike.

Dr. Sanicas has received numerous other awards, including the Top 100 COVID Medical Influencers (2020), British Council Alumni Awards in the Professional Achievement Category (2018), Study UK Alumni Awards as a Science and Sustainability Global Finalist (2023), and The Blue and Gold Alumni Association The Outstanding Alumnus Award (2023). As a fellow of the Royal Society for Public Health, the Royal Society for Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, and the Royal Society of Arts, his contributions to public health have garnered the highest recognition and acclaim.

Education and Mentorship

Beyond his remarkable professional accomplishments, Dr. Sanicas is a passionate advocate for education and mentorship. He believes that the world needs more physicians and scientists who can effectively communicate their expertise on global health issues. He dedicates time to inspiring young students and professionals, mentoring at institutions, such as the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, the University of Leeds, and the University of the Philippines - Manila.

As a dynamic science speaker and advocate, Dr. Sanicas shares his knowledge of infectious diseases and vaccines with a broad audience through social media. He has amassed over 37,000 followers on X (formerly Twitter), more than 16,000 on Facebook (Meta), and over 10,000 on LinkedIn. As co-host of the Global Health Cast, he reaches thousands of viewers per episode, making complex health issues accessible to everyone. He also supports science education as a patron of *SciShow*, a popular science video series boasting 6.7 million subscribers.

Dr. Sanicas's dedication extends beyond medicine and science; he is committed to social responsibility and the arts. Since 2012, he has been a long-time supporter and child sponsor of Save the Children and World Vision International, reflecting his deep commitment to making the world a better place.