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*In conferring the PAFIOO Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino Award upon the Philippine Nurses Association of New York, Inc. (PNANY), the President recognizes its pivotal role in securing the allocation and expediting the release of COVID-19 vaccines to the Philippines and tireless efforts in upholding the highest standards of nursing practice while bolstering the professional development and welfare of the Filipino-American nursing community.*

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## *Philippine Nurses Association of New York, Inc.* **(PNANY)** **United States of America**

Since its founding on June 1, 1929, the Philippine Nurses Association of New York, Inc. (PNANY) has embodied the values of compassion, commitment, and professional excellence, making it a vital force in the lives of Filipino-American nurses and the broader Filipino diaspora. Over the years, PNANY has evolved into a dynamic and supportive network of healthcare professionals, now boasting 331 members. The association has played a critical role in advancing the professional development of its members, advocating for public health, and fostering a sense of cultural unity and pride among Filipino-American nurses.

One of PNANY's most impactful initiatives took place during the COVID-19 pandemic. As the Philippines grappled with a critical shortage of vaccines in 2021, PNANY, alongside other Filipino-American groups and associations, worked closely with U.S. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer to expedite the release of 5 million AstraZeneca vaccines to the Philippines. This life-saving effort, initiated through the group's direct appeal to Senator Schumer and the subsequent push for

vaccine allocation by the United States government, was a monumental achievement that underscored the organization's commitment to its homeland. By helping to secure vaccines for the Philippines, PNANY not only supported the country's pandemic response but also showcased the power of diaspora communities in influencing international health policy and humanitarian aid.

### **Championing Professional Development**

PNANY's commitment to the professional growth of Filipino-American nurses is unwavering. The organization has offered a wide array of educational programs, including webinars, workshops, and conferences designed to keep its members at the forefront of healthcare innovations and best practices.

These initiatives cover a broad spectrum of topics—from advancements in patient care to leadership in healthcare settings—ensuring that Filipino-American nurses remain equipped to meet the evolving challenges of the healthcare

industry. By providing these opportunities for continuous learning, PNANY empowers its members to excel in their careers and make meaningful contributions to healthcare both in the United States and abroad. It collaborates with other nursing organizations and stakeholders to advocate for policies that benefit the nursing profession and the Filipino-American community in general.

### Public Health Advocacy

In addition to fostering professional growth, PNANY has been a staunch advocate for public health, particularly in addressing tuberculosis (TB) within the Filipino-American community. From 2016 to 2024, PNANY partnered with the New York City Department of Health's Bureau of Tuberculosis Control to conduct TB screenings in Queens, New York.

This initiative aimed to raise awareness about TB transmission, improve treatment outcomes, and reduce the stigma associated with the disease. PNANY's culturally sensitive approach and its collaboration with community leaders helped make this effort a success, further cementing the association's reputation as a champion of public health in underserved communities.

Apart from tuberculosis, PNANY is also committed to addressing other critical health issues like diabetes. During health festivals in New York, the organization conducts health screenings and provides diabetes education for the Filipino-American community.

### Community Outreach

PNANY's impact extends beyond healthcare advocacy. The association has been deeply involved in community outreach and charitable work, both in the United States and the Philippines. In December 2023, PNANY organized a food pantry and toy drive for children with HIV in hospitals in Manhattan. Additionally, the organization provided health screenings and essential care services to Ukrainian refugees in New York, offering vital resources, such as food and clothing to those displaced by conflict. PNANY's work with these diverse groups highlights its broader mission to serve those in need, regardless of nationality or background.

In the Philippines, PNANY's *Balik-Turo* and *Salin Kaalaman* initiatives have made a lasting impact. Through these programs, the association has provided essential training to nursing students and faculty members, bolstering the local healthcare system and competencies of the future healthcare workforce. The *Balik-Bigay* medical mission and food pantry program of PNANY also benefited the underserved communities in Negros Occidental.

In January 2024, the Philippine Nurses Association of New York (PNANY), in collaboration with the Philippine

Nurses Association of America (PNAA), conducted a *Balik-Turo* seminar attended by more than 1,200 nursing students and faculty at the University of St. La Salle in Bacolod City. They also conducted a medical mission and the distribution of food packs, which provided much-needed assistance to at least 200 families in Negros Occidental.

Similarly, in January 2023, more than 800 students and faculty participated in the *Salin-Kaalaman* seminar at Central Philippine University. Both initiatives focused on topics, such as mental health, leadership, and infection control. These efforts highlight PNANY's unwavering dedication to advancing education, improving healthcare, and serving the community.

### Humanitarian Relief

PNANY has consistently shown its readiness to respond to crises, both at home and abroad. In December 2022, after a series of devastating typhoons struck the Philippines, PNANY directed resources to provide clean water and sanitation facilities to affected communities in Maguindanao and Cagayan. The organization also launched fundraising initiatives to support Filipinos impacted by wildfires in Maui, Hawaii, highlighting its commitment to aiding those in need, regardless of location. PNANY's disaster relief efforts have provided essential aid and supported the post-disaster recovery of the affected communities.

### Recognitions

PNANY's outstanding contributions to the nursing profession and its humanitarian efforts have garnered widespread recognition. In December 2023, Assemblymember Steven B. Raga of New York State District 30 honored PNANY with an outstanding citation for its dedication to the Filipino community and the advancement of the nursing profession. New York City Mayor Eric L. Adams also officially proclaimed May 23, 2023 as PNANY Day in recognition of the organization's significant cultural and professional contributions to the city. Other community organizations also recognized PNANY with the Outstanding Organization Award and *Bayani ng Mundo* Award in 2023.

### Looking Ahead

As PNANY approaches its centennial anniversary, its legacy of service, advocacy, and professional excellence continues to inspire. Through its tireless efforts to elevate the nursing profession, address public health challenges, and support vulnerable populations, PNANY has made an indelible mark far beyond New York. The association's work has touched lives in the Philippines and across the globe, creating a ripple effect of positive change in healthcare and humanitarian service.