

**THE NEUROSURGERY OUTREACH FOUNDATION**



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*In conferring the PAFIOO Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino Award upon The Neurosurgery Outreach Foundation, Inc. (NOF), the President recognizes its unwavering dedication and contribution to delivering specialized care for Filipinos with complex neurosurgical conditions that highlights its collective efforts to elevate the quality and accessibility of neurosurgical treatment for the underprivileged in the Philippines.*

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## *The Neurosurgery Outreach Foundation, Inc.* **(NOF)**

**United States of America**

In a world fraught with challenges, hope is often the flicker that sustains us through even the darkest of times. This notion resonates deeply with the mission of The Neurosurgery Outreach Foundation, Inc. (NOF), a U.S.-based organization dedicated to treating and curing some of the most complex neurosurgical conditions. What makes NOF stand out is its commitment to providing access to these life-saving treatments to those who need them most—individuals in underserved communities who would otherwise be unable to access care because of cost and lack of capacity.

The NOF, founded in 2010 and based in Jacksonville, Florida, has been instrumental in addressing the global demand for neurosurgical care. According to recent studies, approximately 5 billion people around the world lack access to safe and timely surgical care. This staggering figure reveals the depth of the healthcare inequity that the NOF is working to combat, particularly in regions like Asia, where nearly 70% of unmet surgical needs exist, including roughly 14 million new cases that demand essential neurosurgery each year.

Since its inception, the NOF has been driven by a singular vision: to advance neurosurgical care and the treatment

of brain and spine diseases in underserved communities. They achieve this through their Educational Surgical Missions (ESM), which are spearheaded by volunteer neurosurgeons who bring world class care to communities that have limited resources. Through these missions, the NOF fosters a rich exchange of ideas, best practices, and innovative techniques that are adapted to the local context.

The NOF's efforts have been particularly impactful in the Philippines, where they have formed a long-standing partnership with the Philippine General Hospital (PGH). Serving nearly 700,000 patients annually, PGH is the largest government hospital in the country, and a significant portion of its patients are from marginalized communities. The hospital also treats approximately 3,500 individuals each year who suffer from neurosurgical conditions, many of whom are in advanced stages of illness. The complexity of these cases and the extent of resources required are immense, making the partnership with NOF crucial for the hospital's operations.

### **A Decade of Partnership**

Since 2012, the NOF has supported PGH in multiple capacities. Beyond providing financial assistance,

they have sent essential medical supplies. These contributions are vital to maintaining the hospital's Pediatric Neurosurgical and Craniofacial Operating Unit (PNCOU), which performs life-saving surgeries for around 400 patients annually. This assistance has also significantly reduced wait times for critical procedures, allowing patients to receive timely interventions.

However, the NOF's impact goes far beyond just material donations. They have actively participated in the academic and professional development of PGH's neurosurgical residents. By providing educational resources, facilitating international observerships, and inviting world-renowned experts to mentor and train local surgeons, the NOF has elevated the level of neurosurgical care in the Philippines to meet international standards.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic tested the resilience of healthcare systems across the globe, and PGH was no exception. During this time of crisis, the NOF once again demonstrated its commitment by being one of the first organizations to offer support. Their contributions to personal protective equipment (PPE), medical supplies, and financial aid were crucial in helping the hospital maintain its operations during one of the most challenging periods in modern history.

In the past 12 years, the NOF's partnership with PGH has provided more than ₱8 million worth of assistance, a figure that continues to grow. The depth of this relationship speaks volumes about the foundation's genuine dedication to its mission and to the Filipino people.

### **Expanding Reach**

The NOF's efforts are not limited to the nation's capital. Through their ESM, they have extended their reach to other government hospitals in the Philippines, including the Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center (VSMMC) in Cebu and the Davao Regional Medical Center. At VSMMC, the NOF has made significant contributions through its Department of Neurosurgery Brain and Spine Center, which provides medical and surgical care to more than 900 patients from the Visayas and Mindanao regions annually. Among these assistance include bringing medical specialists to share cutting-edge techniques with local doctors and participating in complex neurosurgical procedures.

Additionally, the NOF has donated critical neurosurgical equipment, including aneurysm clips, endoscopic instruments, and cranial fixation devices. For many patients, these donations have meant the difference between life and death. Take, for instance, the story of a retired school teacher who faced an agonizing decision: deplete her entire life savings to treat a life-threatening brain aneurysm or continue living with the constant risk of it rupturing. Through the NOF's Equipment Donation Program, she received a donated flow diverter stent and underwent surgery free of charge just in time—allowing

her to enjoy her retirement without the looming threat of a medical catastrophe.

### **Transforming Lives**

Another key component of the NOF's work is its commitment to the professional development of Filipino neurosurgeons. The foundation offers annual educational awards to deserving neurosurgery residents and trainees, allowing them to attend international conferences, training courses, and observership programs. This opportunity not only broadens their medical knowledge but also equips them with the skills needed to apply the latest neurosurgical techniques in their home country.

These educational initiatives are creating a ripple effect. Filipino doctors who have benefited from the NOF's training programs return with enhanced expertise, which they use to treat patients with complex conditions. In turn, these patients receive world class care that might otherwise have been out of reach.

The NOF has also established a Neurosurgical Patient Assistance Fund at two charity hospitals in the Philippines. One of which is in collaboration with the Let's Save The Brain Foundation (LSTB). This fund helps remove one of the most significant barriers to treatment: the high cost of neurosurgical care. From 2021 to 2023, the fund has supported 71 indigent pediatric and adult neurosurgery patients, with an impressive 80% survival rate. The NOF donated equipment for hydrocephalus treatment, aneurysm clips, and surgical drills for complex brain operations.

Among the many lives touched by this program is that of a child with hydrocephalus whose family had abandoned him due to the insurmountable medical expenses. Thanks to the NOF, he underwent a successful surgery and was later adopted by a loving family—a true testament to the life-changing power of this organization's work.

### **Service and Compassion**

The NOF's impact on the Filipino community is immeasurable. Their contributions have saved lives, transformed healthcare systems, and empowered future generations of neurosurgeons. From donating equipment to facilitating life-saving surgeries and from training local medical professionals to providing financial assistance, the NOF continues to embody the spirit of compassion and service.

As the foundation marks more than a decade of partnership with the Philippines, its ongoing work highlights a commitment to ensuring that no one is deprived of the neurosurgical care they need. Through their enduring mission, the NOF serves as a beacon of hope for those facing the most challenging neurosurgical conditions, reminding the world that even in the toughest of times, there are still those willing to bring light.