

## **PhilSPEN is HI TEC NOW**

### **Harnessing Innovative Technology for Education in Clinical Nutrition On the Web**

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#### **Description of the initiative**

For the past six years, PhilSPEN has conducted Basic Nutrition Support (BNS) and Advanced Nutrition Therapy (ANT) courses specifically for Doctors, Dietitians, Nurses, Pharmacists, with 2,206 participants in total. However, despite these efforts, we have been unable to follow up on the progress of our graduates and keep them updated on the latest news on clinical nutrition. Our country, the Philippines, is an archipelago made up of 1,707 islands, making physical follow up geographically difficult.

According to 'Digital in 2017' report, the Philippines is the world's no.1 in terms of time spent on social media. Social media users grew by 25%, up to 12 million over the last year. There are now 47 million active Facebook accounts in the Philippines. Messaging apps and Chat Bots are the platforms of the future, now surpassing use of social networks.

The objective of HI TEC NOW initiative is to integrate innovative technology into our current BNS and ANT courses so that we can network with our graduates and continuously reinforce their learning through online interaction.

#### **Planned activities & deliverables**

We will create a "Chat Bot" for Frequently Asked Questions in Clinical Nutrition and nutrition guidelines. There will be test questions to evaluate knowledge and practice. For clinicians who need to seek expert advice, they will be directed to a 'Tele-nutrition portal' for face-to-face consult with Philspen's pool of resource persons. There will be follow-up sessions to assess the outcome of the online consult. These two online tools will be introduced to all participants of our BNS and ANT courses.

Concrete deliverables are (1) a basic Chat Bot program which can later evolve into an advanced program, both accessible on smart phones, (2) subscription to an interactive portal for Tele-nutrition for the participants (3) actual conduct of BNS and ANT courses (2 BNS and 1 ANT for doctors, 2 BNS and 1 ANT for dietitians, 2 BNS for pharmacists, and 2 BNS for nurses) in 2018 and 2019.

#### **Resources & enablers**

The services of a Chat Bot programmer and tele-nutrition provider will approximately cost USD 12,000. Each BNS course will cost PHP125,000 (€2,300) to run, which includes cost of printing of manuals, rental of venue and meals for maximum of 50 participants, transportation and honorarium for 4-6 teachers. The grant will be used to fund the technology as well as actual conduct of courses. Additional sponsorship from private companies and training institutions will also be sought.

The success of this project will depend on the full cooperation of the participants to use the available tools after they complete the BNS and ANT courses. Despite our high social media usage, the Philippine's broadband speed is the slowest in Asia Pacific. Thus, the success of this project will also depend on acquisition of reliable internet access for the resource persons who will conduct tele-Nutrition.

#### **Results/outcomes & expected impact**

We hope to reach at least 300 participants (multi-disciplinary) in 24 months, with at least 50% utilizing and actively engaged in our online tools and with at least 10% utilizing the tele-nutrition portal. We are aiming for enhanced knowledge and practice as evaluated by the improvement in the scores from the pre and post test during the conduct of the BNS/ ANT courses and the scores in test questions from the online tools. Other expected outcomes include application of expert's advice to actual clinical practice using the face to face consult and easy and less expensive communication/ networking tool for the graduates of our courses.

Our ultimate goal is patient care. With this project, we hope to integrate and standardize the practice of nutrition based on what was learned. It is through sharing of knowledge that leads to the best practice to ultimately help our patients.

The use of mobile apps, chatbots, social media and tele-Nutrition are all innovative and popular tools that we, as nutrition advocates, can use to our advantage in providing optimal nutritional care.

Although this project at the onset may not yet influence our local national policies, we hope that it will indeed influence practice of our colleagues who manage nutrition therapy in their own hospitals.

The tools used in this project may also be applicable to (1) patients who have questions about nutrition, i.e. patient to professional online interaction, (2) professionals who took ESPEN PG-LLL or LLL or similar courses, and (3) professionals who need to communicate from overseas. These tools have potential for universal use by nutrition advocates, whether beginner or advanced level.

**In the digital age, information becomes knowledge,  
but knowledge is not power.... unless shared.  
Let's all spread HI TEC NOW!**