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*Note: This is a draft of a working technical paper to map the history of nursing informatics in the Philippines. Scholars and nursing informatics practitioners are in the process of tracing the origins of nursing informatics in clinical practice, academe and research.*

The Philippine nursing community have long sought to keep up with increasing use of information and technology in the healthcare system. Nursing Informatics follows the footsteps of biomedical informatics which has gained relative popularity earlier than its other allied medical counterparts. Despite being in its early stages of development the sub-specialty of nursing informatics on the Philippines have more than a decade of history which led to future programs and activities. Some of the major milestones in nursing informatics history in the Philippines which includes the participation of the Philippine Nurses Association (PNA) in the development of Standards for Health Information in the Philippines (SHIP) in 1999, the formation of the Master of Science in Health Informatics (MSHI) which began in 2005 and the formation of the Philippine Nursing Informatics Association (PNIA) in 2010 as a sub-specialty organization of PNA for nursing informatics.

## **Introduction:**

The words "nursing informatics" were unfamiliar among the nursing community until the year 2008. There were only a handful of people with knowledge and experience in nursing informatics but the discipline have not yet found its recognition as a sub-specialty of nursing arts and science in the country. The origin of this budding discipline indirectly came from the pioneers of health informatics in the Philippines.

The Philippine Medical Informatics Society (PMIS) and its founders had strong influence in the development of health informatics in the Philippines. The PMIA was officially registered under the Securities and Exchange Commission in 1996 by its board composed of eleven physician. The organization was headed by Dr. Alvin Marcelo. (see [source](#))

## **Origins**

Since 1998, several faculty members of the University of the Philippines began formal education and training. Dr. Herman Tolentino took a post-doctoral fellowship in medical informatics at the University of Washington. Dr. Alvin Marcelo followed a year later for his training at the National Library of Medicine. Dr. Cito Maramba went to Coventry for his Masters in Information Sciences at the University of Warwick. They were later followed by other physicians such as Dr. Micheal Muin and Dr. Ryan Bañez.

By the year 2003, a Master of Science in Health Informatics was proposed to be offered by UP-Manila College of Medicine (major in medical informatics) and the College of Arts and Science (major in bioinformatics) and was later approved to be offered starting academic year 2005-2006.

In 1999, a study group was formed headed by the National Institute of Health of the University of the Philippines Manila. This group identified international standards for health information and their adaptability in the Philippines. The document is referred to as the "Standards of Health Information in the Philippines, 1999 version" or "SHIP99".

Representatives from various sectors collaborated on this project including the Philippine Nurses Association (PNA) in the person of Ms. Evelyn Protacio.

### **CHED as a Catalyst**

The nursing community was still yet to follow its international counterparts in the adoption of information, communication and technology in nursing practice in the Philippines. Despite the inclusion of Informatics course in the undergraduate curriculum which focused on basic desktop applications, the need for genuine nursing informatics course had not yet been realized. In 2008, Nursing Informatics course in the undergraduate curriculum was defined by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order 5 Series of 2008. This was later revised and included as Health Informatics course in CHED Memorandum Order 14 Series of 2009. This will be first implemented in the summer of 2010.

### **Organization**

Early in 2009, Mr. Kristian R. Sumabat and Ms. Mia Alcantara-Santiago, both nurses and graduate students of Master of Science in Health Informatics at the University of the Philippines, Manila began drafting plans to create a nursing informatics organization. In February 2010, they began recruiting other nursing informatics specialists and practitioners to organize a group which later became as the Philippine Nursing Informatics Association. They were joined by founding members Ms. Sheryl Ochea, a graduate of MAster of Science in Nursing major in nursing informatics at Xavier University (Ohio, USA), Ms. Alexandra Bernal, a graduate student and telehealth nurse of the National Telehealth Center, Ms. Pia Pelayo, a former telehealth nurse and a project coordinator of the National Epidemiology Center, Department of Health and Mr. Sid Cardenas, also a telehealth nurse. Other founding members include Mr. Noel Bañez, Ms. Rona Abcede, and Mr. Harby Ongbay Abellanos.

### **Issues and Challenges**

Like many other disciplines, nursing informatics face many challenges while in its infancy stage. The inclusion of informatics as an integral part of the undergraduate curriculum has been one of the most influential factors for the increased awareness and interest in this field of nursing. However, the contents of the curriculum was adapted from international materials which does not match the local needs. A community-centered approach to the use of information, communication and technology in nursing practice must be adapted to ensure the impact of the program in the local healthcare system. Lack of certification and credentialing programs in post-graduate levels are also absent with the scarcity of local nursing informatics experts. This new field has yet to gain acceptance and recognition in the nursing community as a sub-specialty.

### **Future Direction**

Development of training, certification and credentialing programs are in the pipeline for the Philippine Nursing Informatics Association. Future partnerships with local and international nursing and health informatics organizations have started as well. Other programs are expected to be slowly delivered with PNIA's CORE X strategic platform which stands for Competency, Organization, Recognition, Experience and Expertise. It is also a major thrust to support the use of health information standards in the Philippines and to have nursing informatics specialists in every hospital in the country.