Health-care standard in the Philippines rises; four hospitals in Metro Manila get international accreditation

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THE health-care system in the Philippines is considered generally to meet global standards, with hospitals and other medical centers in the country able to pass accreditation tests given by international organizations.

Four Philippine hospitals have been cited by Joint Commission International (JCI) for rendering the best service to Filipino patients. They are Makati Medical Center, The Medical City in Pasig City, St. Luke’s Medical Center (SLMC) in Quezon City and Chong Hua Hospital in Cebu.

The honor is a recognition of the caliber of hospital staff in the Philippines, with Filipino medical practitioners being graduates from top universities in the country and many of them having also studied in medical schools in the United States. Some of these US-educated doctors had practiced medicine in America before returning to their native country. Filipino nurses, meanwhile, are internationally competitive, with thousands of them working in many hospitals in foreign countries.

The JCI is a medical commission that helps international health-care organizations, public-health agencies and health ministries evaluate, improve and demonstrate the quality of patient care while at the same time accommodating specific legal, religious and cultural factors in a particular country. It has been accrediting health-care organizations since 1999 and, since then, have accredited approximately 450 public and private health-care organizations in 50 countries.

Its accreditation and certification process is acknowledged by many medical organizations as essential in ensuring a safe environment for their patients, staff and visitors. The JCI Accreditation and Certification procedure is seen as a platform to consider when choosing a hospital or a medical center.

Accreditation
Hospital accreditation is a major factor that should be considered by a patient in picking a medical institution that will provide medical care to him. It is defined by R. Rawlins (R. Rawlins, BMJ. 2001 March 17; 322(7287):674) as a public recognition by a national or international health-care accreditation body of the achievement of accreditation standards by a health-care organization, demonstrated through an independent external peer assessment of that organization’s level of performance in relation to the standards. This means that an institution accredited by a credible accreditation body possesses high standards of health-care service and patient care that add up to the reliability of the institution.

“The demand for quality in delivering health-care services has continuously risen throughout the years. Both national and international accreditation bodies have initiated quality assurance mechanisms for patients to have access to better health-care services,” Dr. Benjamin N. Alimurung, medical director of Makati Medical Center, said.

“The level of confidence and trust of patients in a hospital increases through accreditation, especially by the JCI, since it ensures that the accredited hospital not only performs evidence-based practices but also gives importance to efficiency, quality and effectiveness of health-care delivery and ensures a safe environment for the patients, staff and visitors. It would establish excellence in the delivery of health care and promote continuous quality improvement,” he added.

Makati Medical Center acquired accreditation and certification from JCI in January this year. Alimurung said the center had conducted activities on education and understanding of standards and intent of the standards. Elements of each standard were measured to prepare the hospital for the accreditation process.

“The management made sure that everybody participated in these activities. JCI standards were cascaded from the top management down to frontliners through lectures and educational materials. The activities were kept interesting as well as informative [through] inter-department games and weekly puzzles to encourage and maintain enthusiasm throughout the hospital,” he added.

These preparations by the top management and the frontliners of the hospital earned them the JCI accreditation, which is based on the latest Joint Commission International Accreditation Standards for Hospitals 4th Edition. Though this accreditation improved the already high standards that Makati Medical Center has been known for, Alimurung said the biggest beneficiary would be the patients since they are the ones being served by medical staff with clinical excellence in mind.

“It [JCI accreditation] assures the patients and their families of their involvement in the health-care process as partners. It is an opportunity for the hospital to benchmark with the best hospitals in the world granted with the same level of recognition.”

Makati Medical Center is only one of the four accredited and certified by JCI in the Philippines together with SLMC, which was accredited by the commission in 2003, affirming that the hospital meets the highest standards for patient care and organizational management.

SLMC has been surpassing expectations in medical excellence for over a century now, proving that its health and patient-care standards have become world-class. With astounding success anchored
on five pillars of expertise-expert doctors, state-of-the-art technology, guaranteed patient safety, excellent success rate and passionate customer service, SLMC was the first hospital in the country to be accredited by the JCI.

Now with a new hospital building in Fort Bonifacio Global City, St. Luke’s is expected to reach a larger number of Filipinos who needs medical assistance. With its mission to provide outstanding outpatient care, SLMC is reputedly now the most admired hospital in the Philippines and an acknowledged leader in Asia.

Another JCI-accredited hospital in the country is The Medical City in Pasig City, a private, tertiary-care hospital, which offers impressive facilities as staging areas for the delivery of its cutting-edge health services. The hospital was first accredited by JCI in 2006 for maintaining the highest international standards of quality for health-care organizations.

It was reaccredited by the commission in 2009 and is continuing to provide the best patient care through its distinguished medical staff of 1,100 physicians, all of whom are experienced and recognized experts in their various fields of specialization.

Chong Hua Hospital in Cebu City also takes pride in being an accredited medical institution by JCI. Its patient-focused concept earned it the accreditation from the commission. Chong Hua Hospital tailors its patient care to the needs of every patient. It was the third medical institution accredited by JCI in 2009 after The Medical City in 2006.

In Photo: Medical institutions in the Philippines improve patient care through advance medical technology.