

(Launching of the) DOST-PCHR Natural Substance Research Program

Antonio D. Ligsay, MD

The Philippine Council for Health Research and Development under the Department of Science and Technology tasked with a mandate to develop health products and technologies to address the current and projected future disease burdens in the Philippines, proudly presents “TuklasLunas.”

TuklasLunas refers to the drug discovery development program, hatched by DOST-PCHR officials in a bid to provide solutions the countries’ medical needs.

For 2011-2016, PCHR will be initiating several projects in line with TuklasLunas. Starting off with the endeavour to establish a Drug Discovery Database which will store information on all researches conducted on natural products. The database is expected to serve as a tool on guiding researchers as to which species have the potential for further studies leading to the discovery of a new drug.

Also, PCHR hopes to establish an animal facility which will cater to experimental animal studies, leading to good understanding of the toxicological and bioavailability properties of candidate drugs.

Last but not the least, (there will be) setting up not one but three Natural Substance Research Centers covering the three main groups of islands of the Philippines: Luzon, Visayas, (and) Mindanao.

These centers will be the primary research laboratory for the conduct of drug discovery research and will be called TuklasLunas Centers. The center is expected to generate cooperation among nearby universities and research institutions towards collaborative researches by unifying each institution’s strengths and capacities. The center will be chosen based on the institutions’ R&D landscape focusing on specialized personnel, infrastructure availability, institutional R&D support and performance.

In Mindanao, the PCHR-NSRC Selection Board chooses MSU-IIT (Mindanao State University – Iligan Institute of Technology) to host the DOST-PCHR Natural Substance Research Center. MSU-IIT is headed by their Chancellor,

Dr. Sukarno Tanggol. The Natural Products Research Team is headed by Dr. Franco Teves, Dr. Roberto Malaluan and Dr. Mylene Uy.

MSU-IIT is known for its excellent R&D track record, competitive staff and institutional capacity. In effect, the award will cover provisions for laboratory equipment like the High Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC), Fraction collectors, rotary evaporators and others.

This awarding is just the start of an effort to harness the natural resources of our country in a bid to strengthen the drug discovery and development campaign of PCHRD.

Towards 2016, PCHRD along with the chosen Natural Substance Research Centers will continuously push boundaries to develop new drugs that will benefit the Filipino in the long run.