

## **PHILIPPINE STAR**

### **RP HOSTS WORLD HEALTH TOURISM CONGRESS**

March 22, 2009



The Philippine delegation led by DOT Undersecretary Cynthia Carrion (4th from left) with Jackie Synder, Philippine Tourism Office Singapore; Jing Nieves, DOT Asia Pacific's project officer; Lara Santos, health and leisure manager; Joyce Alumno, HIM Communications, Inc. president and managing director; and Carmina Desales, Capitol Medical Center VP/COO.

MANILA, Philippines - The Philippines takes center stage in the global healthcare industry as it plays host to the 4<sup>th</sup> World Health Tourism Congress on March 26-28 at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza. This is the first time that an Asian country is hosting this event after Germany, Cyprus, and Spain. Around 100 buyers from all over the world are participating in the business-to-business sessions and will be matched with the leading medical travel providers from different parts of the world.

"We are hopeful that our 25 hospitals, clinics, spas, and other solution providers participating in the B2B sessions will bag supply contracts, establish market linkages, and form partnerships that will reap economic benefits for our country," says Tourism Undersecretary Cynthia Carrion.

Philippine healthcare providers continue to create a niche in the global healthcare arena by participating in overseas conferences such as the one held in Singapore last Feb. 21-24. The Global Healthcare Congress drew more than 200 captains of industry from 40 countries and focused on issues concerning the new realities of global patients; the legal jurisdictions involved in medical travel and malpractice; how to measure quality, excellence, patient outcomes, and what constitutes patient satisfaction; laws and regulations that preside over international referral systems; public policy maker's responses to globalized healthcare; insurance payout issues, continuity of care and managing resources.

Leading the Philippine delegation, Undersecretary Carrion of DOT's Office of Sports and Wellness Tourism said, "The Philippines has created a niche in the global healthcare industry with its own unique brand of caring. Our competent healthcare professionals are the best in the world and have been serving peoples in over 100 countries for several decades now." In a panel discussion where Carrion sat down with Thailand's Deputy Permanent Secretary for Health Suwit Wibulpolprasert and panel chairman Dr. Chee Heng Leng of the National University of Singapore, she reiterated the government's efforts in providing a favorable environment for the private sector by putting in place investment incentives and helping in the promotion and marketing of their services globally.

While private hospitals from leading countries offering medical tourism services rake in big revenues, their governments are not actually giving them strong support. This bodes well for the country's private hospitals because they are fully supported by the government with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo signing a decree promoting the Philippines' health and wellness tourism industry and creating partnerships among different government agencies that include the Department of Tourism, Department of

Health, Philippine Retirement Authority, Department of Foreign Affairs, and Department of Trade and Industry, thus providing the business incentives and right investment climate for the industry.