

The Philippine College of Physicians (PCP) 55th Annual Congress

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Pasay City, Philippines

Global Ambassador reflections by: Jason M. Goldman, MD, MACP

As I return to the States on my 20-hour flight, I have time to reflect on the phenomenal experience and the privilege that I had of attending the Philippine College of Physicians 55th Annual Congress. I was struck by several unique experiences and am so impressed with our colleagues across the world. The meeting was held in the city of Manila, and they estimated about 10,000 attendees throughout the several days of the event. It was well organized, well run, and filled with a sense of community and joy.

What struck me first was the respect that everyone showed, especially to me as not only President of the College but also as a Professor of General Medicine. While many of us have such a title, I do not really see us using it in our everyday parlance. At the meeting, I was constantly referred to as professor and not doctor, but it was said with such reverence and respect. Even when with the general public, overhearing me being addressed as professor, the response was one of awe and deference.

The opening ceremonies of the meeting were quite long and divided into sections. All of the diplomates of internal medicine, over 500 newly honored and in attendance, not only took a traditional oath of the diplomate, but each one was called by name and recognized onstage. This is quite different from the additional honoring of new fellows that was to occur at the end of the meeting. After the diplomate ceremony, the convocation occurred with honorary fellowship and a keynote address. I was touched and honored by this recognition, along with the respective presidents of medical associations from Thailand, Indonesia, and Myanmar. The Presidents' Reception after that showed how much love and respect they had for each other, especially Dr. Imelda Mateo, President of the Philippine College of Physicians, as several members of the board serenaded her.

The meeting hosts were very gracious and took me on a tour of many historic sites in Manila.

The plenary session was very well received and speaking to several thousand physicians about genetics, while also learning that their own infrastructure and health care system face many challenges that we do as well, was quite eye opening. The respect they have for ACP and the United States is quite apparent and evident.

Finally, the night of fellowship was one that I never expected to see at an internal medicine meeting, with several thousand attendees in joyful celebration and community. They had professional performers, two of whom are quite famous within the Philippines: Erik Santos and TJ Monterde. Could you imagine our convocation ending and the hall turning into a concert with Taylor Swift or another big-name celebrity coming onstage to sing to us? I saw members of their college crying and screaming in excitement. One of their more local entertainers had good-natured fun at my expense as he attempted to have me join in with the singing. What I lack in vocal talent I make up for in confidence. The whole room would sing at times, and individuals would get up to belt out their favorite part of the song. There was even some dancing involved, and I hope I did the College proud.

For my first Global Ambassador trip, this was quite an amazing experience and one that opened my eyes to a beautiful and diverse culture with such a sense of national pride and exuberance of joy. A lesson we should learn well is to be happy and enjoy the special moments in life.



Dr. Goldman with Philippine College leadership and other invited Presidents.



Opening Ceremony

