

Plae leads celebration of 1st epilepsy awareness week

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has signed proclamation No. 230 Aug. 12 this year declaring the 1st week of September of every year as "National Epilepsy Awareness Week" under the auspices of the Philippine League Against Epilepsy Inc (Plae).

Plae is a non-profit organization of health and health-related professionals committed to improve the quality of life of persons with epilepsy through education, research, prevention, advocacy and delivery of optimal health care.

As the national chapter of the International League Against Epilepsy (Ilae), Plae launched the "Epilepsy: Out of the Shadows" Philippine campaign Sept. 8, 2001, a national epilepsy campaign, which was the country's participation to the Global Campaign Against Epilepsy.

The Global Campaign Against Epilepsy is the first truly global attempt to bring epilepsy out into the open. It is a joint initiative of Ilae, the International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE), and the World Health Organization (WHO). Their joint

mission is to improve the acceptability, treatment, services and prevention of epilepsy worldwide.

The national epilepsy campaign will be developed within the already existing national health care system in collaboration with the Department of Health, public and private sectors, relevant non-government organizations, patients, families, and their caregivers as partners.

As part of the "Out of the Shadows" campaign, Plae leads the celebration of the 1st National Epilepsy Awareness Week, with the slogan "Nagagamot ang Epilepsy", from Sept. 2 to 8.

During the celebration, 42 epilepsy seminars will be held in selected hospitals in Metro Manila and in selected provinces nationwide. There will be 22 epilepsy lay symposiums for non-medical audiences, eight in Metro Manila and the rest in 14 towns/cities covering eight regions from Dagupan to Zamboanga City. Interactive sessions on "Basic Clinical Epilepsy" for primary care physicians and non-neurologists will be held in 18

towns/cities nationwide, covering 10 regions and in 2 hospitals in Metro Manila. Most of these epilepsy seminars will be held between Sept. 2 and 8, a few of them within the month of September.

An essay contest will also be launched at the National Capital and Luzon regions.

Other activities to be held in different regions include radio and TV appearances, a press conference, a motorcade, a drawing contest for children, epilepsy information booths, and free epilepsy clinics. Weeklong activities will be held in Metro Manila, Cebu, Iloilo, Ozamis and Cagayan de Oro cities.

The celebration will be capped by the walkathon "Walking Out of the Shadows of Epilepsy" on Sept. 8, at 6:30 a.m. at the Quezon City Memorial Circle. Registration is free. Breakfast will be served. Prizes and T-shirts will be given away. A simultaneous walkathon will also be held in Iloilo City.

For more information, call the the Epilepsy Hotline at 867-4765.