



Adventist Hospital, Davao, new building

Photo courtesy of North Central Mindanao Conference archives.

# Adventist Hospital–Davao, Inc.

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## KERVEY PUNAY

Kervey Punay is the Patient Experience Officer and Training Officer of Adventist Hospital Davao. He is also serving as the pastor of Catalunan Grande Seventh-day Adventist church. He lives and works in Davao City with his wife Richelle and two children. He is passionate about training and educating co-workers, church members, and youth.

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Adventist Hospital–Davao (AHD) is an ISO 9001-certified hospital offering excellent health care services to the people of Davao City, the largest city in the Philippines. While operations advanced erratically in its early decades, it has since found stability and strength to face squarely the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Notwithstanding its four name changes, the hospital has maintained consistent efforts in high-quality patient care, continuing personnel development, deeper spiritual growth opportunities, higher management efficiency, greater financial stability, and environmental conservation.

From a clinic in a leased space in a downtown city building in the 1960s, it has flourished. In 2020, Adventist Hospital—Davao operated from a three-story building as a healthcare institution that “continues the healing ministry of Jesus Christ through excellent, competent, and compassionate health care services.”

## Founding

The hospital developed in three distinct stages. One was in 1966 when a fifteen-bed clinic was established; the second was in 1987 when it separated itself from the Mindanao Sanitarium and Hospital; and yet another in

1997 when it was reborn as a thirty-four-bed hospital.

When Elder Victoriano M. Montalban first visited Davao City in the 1960s, he saw that a medical facility would be a helpful ministry in the area. It was a sprawling city whose population was on the rise. Moreover, at the time there were only three hospitals in addition a number of scattered clinics.<sup>2</sup> A modest clinic was envisioned to become the “nucleus” of a larger hospital the mission intended to build on a two-hectare lot located in Bangkal along the McArthur Highway about seven kilometers from the city center. The deed of sale for the land, purchased from former Philippine Senator Alejandro D. Almendras, was signed on May 23, 1966, by Montalban on behalf of the SPUM. Funds were unavailable to construct medical facility however; thus, the Davao Mission rented rooms in the San Vicente Building along Tionko Avenue in the heart of Davao City.

On June 1, 1966, the South Philippine Union Mission (SPUM), through the efforts of Dr. Perfecto L. Llaguno, Rhodie M. Llaguno, and Minda Reyes, opened the Davao Sanitarium and Hospital Clinic. A primary care facility in downtown Davao City, it had fifteen beds and a lean staff of three. Surgical services were offered in the rented space.

As Dr. Llaguno said then, “We trust that this clinic will become a strong agency for enhancing God's cause in this area.”<sup>3</sup> The clinic operated for two years, after which work was suspended when the Llagunos were needed at the Mindanao Sanitarium and Hospital (MSH) in Iligan City.<sup>4</sup> They later serviced in Africa as well.

Davao Sanitarium operations were suspended for fifteen years (1968 to 1983) until the MSH medical director, Levi H. Pagunsan, reopened it as a satellite or extension of the MSH for three years (1984-1986)<sup>5</sup>

In 1987, the dream of a hospital was revived when another clinic was opened in Davao, the Davao Sanitarium and Hospital Urgent Health Care Center. It survived until early 1992. From May 1992 to 1996, the Davao Mission struggled to mobilize resources to build a larger and better-equipped hospital. Consequently, the hospital board decided to cease hospital operations from March 1992 through 1996 in order to focus on building a larger hospital structure on the two-hectare lot in Bangkal.

Support for the new hospital came from the Southern Asia-Pacific Division and solicitations, donations, and love offerings from church members in the Philippines and abroad. Church members across the Philippines gave PHP 1.00 for the hospital every Sabbath. Paterno M. Diaz, president of the South Philippine Union Conference (SPUC), shepherded the construction project during this difficult period. On the ground, John Cadava faithfully oversaw and monitored construction work along with Natividad C. Sanz, the property custodian. Characterized as a person of integrity and dedication, she ensured that quality building materials were available when they were needed.<sup>6</sup>

Vicente S. Paypa, president, and Alberto Alojado, treasurer, of the Davao Mission managed the subsequent phases of hospital construction. In December 1995, Ulysses M. Camagay, SPUC treasurer, concurrently served as hospital officer-in-charge while incoming hospital president Absalom S. Fronteras finished his tenure at MSH.

Dr. Gauvin O. Flores, a practicing surgeon, also ensured that physical preparations for the hospital inspection were completed while the incoming medical director, Perfecto L. Llaguno, concluded his work at MSH.

From January to March 1997, the Davao Mission ministers and brethren from city churches, physicians, volunteer nurses, and paramedics focused on the daunting task of completing the requirements for the inspection. Papers were processed for submission to the country's Department of Health (DOH) and other regulatory agencies. Among those whose help was invaluable were Daniel Iyo (hospital treasurer), Linda U. Nermal (nurse and health educator), and Victoria Lauron (Davao Mission administrative secretary).<sup>7</sup> Davao Mission members labored long and hard in true *bayanihar*<sup>8</sup> spirit.

The DOH inspection team from Manila came to Davao Sanitarium and Hospital on June 6, 1997. Shortly thereafter, on June 10, 1997, the sanitarium received its license to operate as a secondary health care facility with a thirty-four-bed capacity.<sup>9</sup> With its medical staff of 18 physicians, the Davao Sanitarium and Hospital offered the following services: major and minor surgical operations, special care nursery, intensive care unit, and 24-hour emergency services. Ancillary services included laboratory, radiology, pharmacy, outpatient clinics, well baby clinic and immunization, and a clinic for infertility and women's diseases.

The Board appointees who opened the hospital doors to the public were Absalom S. Fronteras, CPA (president); Perfecto L. Llaguno, MD, FICS (medical director); Raymund C. Robles (accountant); Ruth M. Fronteras (director of nursing service); and Rhodie M. Llaguno (head of pharmacy).<sup>10</sup> President Fronteras later appointed Jessie Alfanta, treasurer, and Elena D. Lachica human resource director.<sup>11</sup>

The eighteen physicians who composed the medical staff in 1997, included Gauvin O. Flores (surgery/chief of clinics); Edwin Garcia and Faridah Wong (anesthesiology); Michael Wong and Joey Villanueva (surgery); Leo Gallardo (internal medicine-endocrinology); Mae Gallardo, Judy Ann Gatmin (internal medicine); Edgar Ramiterre (internal medicine-rheumatology); Reagan Cabahug and Rex Escalante (internal medicine-cardiology); Rico Hector Fernandez and Rose Marie Naval (pediatrics); Joel Gallardo (pediatric neonatology); Marjory Z. Flores, Imelda Layon, and Herminia Baulos Nartatez (obstetrics/gynecology); Leoncio Ong (pathology); Susan Gaspar (radiology). They treated a total of 5,783 patients in the first two years of operation.<sup>12</sup>

Providing healthcare and auxiliary services in 1997 were twelve registered nurses and two midwives, four nursing aides; two pharmacists, and one pharmacy aide; three laboratory personnel; two registered radiology technicians; one registered nutritionist and dietician and two staff.

The nurses and nursing aides were Elizabeth L. Avaricio, RN (emergency room head); Merlyn L. Gersava, RN (quality assurance/staff nurse/intensive care nurse); Helen S. Francisco, RN (unit head); Aida Lamera, RN; Ivy Charett C. Robles, RN; Russel Nanguicnic, RN; Carol C. Batulayan, RN; Juneth Garcia Bofetiado, RN; Viluzmino Aguillion, RN; Judith Teves, RN; Rowel Concha, RN; Isabelo Cerna, Jr., RN; Arlene Castrece, NA; Mylene Aguirre, NA; Chedilyn Vegafria, NA; and Jocelyn Salada Tabar, NA. The midwives were Honey Paglinawan, RM, and Lucilyn Jardin, RM. Pharmacy head Rhodie M. Llaguno was assisted by Rewelyn M. Ceniza (pharmacy staff) and Jonalie S.

Temblor (pharmacy aide).<sup>13</sup>

Laboratory head Tobias Batulayan was supported by Alex Rodulfa and Emmeline L. Hayag (laboratory staff). Serving in the radiology section were Jeremiah Recto, RRT (radiology head), and Bartolomeo Bartolini, RRT (radiology technician). The dietary section included Chona Camanzo, RND (dietary head), with Mervil Bill Sanz and Rebecca Alojado (dietary staff).<sup>14</sup>

The accounting and billing department had one accountant, Raymund Robles, and one cashier/biller, Romeo Mamacang. Mae Beth Cabaluna handled medical records. One medical secretary, Janet Teves Llavan, provided support services to the medical staff. Other support personnel were two laundry staff, Josephine Salada Telod and Nestor Gonzaga; one carpenter, Nepumoceno Balansag; and two drivers who were also mechanics, Dan Tamdang and Dan Binas.<sup>15</sup>

## History

Seven months after the hospital opened, its Medicare accreditation was approved on January 1, 1998, on its own merits. Thereafter, the number of patients seeking medical assistance rose. In June of the same year, adjustments in operations included the transfer of the operating room and delivery room to another area under the leadership of Perfecto Llaguno, president, and Benjamin Bibay, medical director.<sup>16</sup>

Changes on the cusp of the twenty-first century had to do with hospital administration, name, and attention to quality. Dr. Geovanni Patalinghug became vice president for medical affairs in January 2003, the same year that a woman, Myra Limi-Mitra, MBA, assumed the hospital president for the first time. Two years later, on May 23, 2005, the hospital's name was changed to the Davao Adventist Hospital, Inc.<sup>17</sup> Together with hospital managers and associates, President Mitra and Dr. Patalinghug worked with Donald Weideman, CEO of the Adventist Health Care System/Asia, towards quality improvement and safety initiatives in hospital management, clinical practice, and patient-centeredness. The hospital gained an ISO 9001: 2008 Quality Management System Certification on November 24, 2006, still within the term of President Mitra.

The quest for quality and service excellence included both human resources and substantial upgrades in facilities and equipment. An endowment from the DMMA College of Southern Philippines made possible the construction of another building. This translated into additional rooms for patients, clinics, laboratories, and offices, as well as an ophthalmology clinic, a new cafeteria and dietary section. All these developments allowed for not only expanded service but also greater financial viability.

Dr. Geovanni A. Patalinghug began serving as hospital president on May 1, 2007. Less than a year after, on November 11, 2008, Davao Adventist Hospital was permitted to operate as a sixty-two-bed tertiary hospital!<sup>18</sup>

Five years later, on February 1, 2012, Patalinghug yielded the presidency to Dr. Edgar Claude Nadal who led the institution until January 31, 2016. However, Dr. Patalinghug served as Dr. Nadal's VP for medical affairs until

both their terms ended in January 2016. Some of the fruits of their labor included equipment and instruments, such as computed tomography (CT Scan) and filmless X-Ray, as well as sports facilities. They undertook the construction of a multipurpose court, a penthouse, and modernized the hospital façade. Other improvements included thirty-four private rooms, diagnostic sections, and additional transport facilities.<sup>19</sup>

The hospital was rechristened Adventist Hospital–Davao, Inc. on November 19, 2013.<sup>20</sup> Significant equipment acquisition were not only medical but also sports-related—for example a basketball court and fitness gym. These reflected *cura personalis*, care for the health and well-being of hospital personnel. Transport facilities were also augmented at this time. A new building was constructed, as well as a complete perimeter fence system that protected investments in both people and property.

Apart from safety and protection of patients, employees, and hospital premises, the hospital leadership focused efforts on the following: continuing professional learning for employees; spiritual growth opportunities for employees and clients; customer service and satisfaction; environmental protection; financial excellence; and management efficiency.<sup>21</sup>

Because the succeeding generation of leaders maintained this keen attention to quality standards, Adventist Hospital–Davao began its new life as a seventy-five-bed level 2 hospital on August 5, 2016.<sup>22</sup> This milestone happened during the terms of Ellizer C. Navarro and Dr. Kenneth Tandug who were elected president and vice president for medical affairs, respectively, on January 28, 2016.<sup>23</sup>

While Dr. Tandug continued to serve until 2020, Navarro was called to the General Conference Auditing Service (GCAS) in August 2018. Thus, Marijoe S. Pialogo was elected as hospital president on September 18, 2018.<sup>24</sup> Since then, he has shepherded the hospital towards quality excellence and integrity, and other core values, such as accessibility, respect, and compassion. Sensitivity to and respect for persons with disability (PWD) was demonstrated in the installation of access ramps, and the renovation and relocation of the emergency room, information center, business office, pharmacy, purchasing, and patient rooms. Environmental protection and respect for city regulations were the impetus for allocating resources for a sewage treatment plant.<sup>25</sup>

Security systems included fire suppression and alarm with hydrotesting, paging, and hospital information. Wayfinding was made easier with signage inside the hospital as well as at the entrance, which also provided greater access to hospital services. Other developments included a new chapel that was a compassionate response to spiritual needs and provided a haven for the faith community. A new hemodialysis center for renal replacement therapy was also added to the hospital's services.<sup>26</sup>

Through all its years of service, Adventist Hospital–Davao has stayed the course and delivered on its mission to “continue the healing ministry of Jesus Christ.” In 2020, healthcare services included 24-hour emergency service; inpatient care services; major and minor surgical operations; intensive care units (adult and neonatal); outpatient clinics; clinical laboratory; imaging (x-ray, ultrasound, 2D echocardiogram, and CT scan); pharmacy; well-baby clinic and immunization; infertility and women's diseases clinic; endoscopy and colonoscopy; and

hemodialysis.

Doctors' specializations include cardiology, cataract surgery, colorectal surgery, dental, dermatology, ear nose and throat–head and neck surgery, endocrinology, gastroenterology, general surgery, internal medicine, laparoscopic surgery (cholecystectomy), nephrology, obstetrics and gynecology, ophthalmology, orthopedics, pediatrics, and pulmonology.

Valuing compassion and accessibility has resulted in special procedure packages, counselling and training programs, and spiritual care and outreach activities. Special, more affordable packages are offered for annual physical examinations, obstetrics/normal deliveries, caesarean sections, and selected surgeries such as laparoscopic cholecystectomy.<sup>27</sup> Counseling programs include special diet counseling, lactation counseling, prayer and spiritual counseling, and smoking cessation counseling. Other programs promote health education and healthy lifestyles—such as Creation, Celebration, and Newstart—and clinical pastoral education and spiritual care through a singing band that visits patients in their rooms. Discharged patient visitations are also conducted, along with community outreach activities, such as Adopt-a-Barangay, mission schools, and medical missions.<sup>28</sup>

The hospital's unfailing commitment to and successful execution of its mission are widely recognized by companies and health insurance providers in the region. The hospital has earned accreditations from more than thirty companies that require hospital services as well as more than twenty-five partners in healthcare insurance services. Companies that trust Adventist Hospital–Davao include schools and universities, food production companies, utility, engineering, and construction corporations, as well as government institutions and nongovernment organizations.

Solid as a health promotion institution, Adventist Hospital–Davao resolved to become a training hospital in 2020, taking on the challenge of training healthcare providers who can provide excellent, safe, and compassionate service to those in need.

## Historical Role

Registered as a nonprofit and nonstock corporation, Adventist Hospital–Davao is a Level 2 hospital with a seventy-five-bed capacity. It has board-certified physicians, competent and compassionate nurses, management, and staff as well as medical modern facilities and medical technology. It operates under the system of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a subsidiary of the SPUC. It is recognized by the Southern Asia-Pacific Division and the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. It is one of ten Adventist hospitals in the Philippines.

Adventist Hospital–Davao serves the largest city in the country whose population in 2020 exceeded 1.8 million. Attentive to safety standards, it is the first hospital in Davao City to advocate smoking cessation in accordance

with the City Government of Davao Ordinance 367-12, Series of 2012: Anti-Smoking Campaign. The hospital's chaplaincy offers free smoking cessation seminars. It distinguishes itself from other healthcare organizations by its excellent patient care services including pastoral care services, health education, and vegetarian food. It has consistently engaged in community outreach programs including medical missions and smoking cessation campaigns to extend its health promotion ministry and widen its sphere of influence.

Operating under DOH License to Operate (LTO # 11-0027-20-H2-2), Adventist Hospital–Davao is ISO 9001-2015 certified by TUV SUD (Cert Registration # TUV100 05 0676). Government accreditations include Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (H11018620), Social Security System (09-149-7014-5), and Bureau of Internal Revenue (TIN 000-847-207-000). Its Davao City mayor's permit is B-13495-5, and its business ID is 1997-04115-1.

Adventist Hospital–Davao is located at Km. 7, McArthur Highway, 8023 Bangkal, Barangay Talomo, Talomo District, Davao City, Philippines.

## Outlook

Adventist Hospital–Davao strives to sustain its momentum as it expands healthcare services that respond to the needs of the community in which it is rooted. It has not wavered in fulfilling its mission “to continue the healing ministry of Jesus Christ.”

In its pursuit of excellence in safety and service, Adventist Hospital–Davao takes utmost care of patients and health workers alike, intent on upholding the core values of integrity, respect for diversity, and compassion through empathy and kindness.

As a training hospital, Adventist Hospital–Davao cultivates a strong sense of teamwork and enkindles the life-giving spirit of innovation to overcome the challenges of a sin-stricken world, moving courageously into the future.

## List of Name Changes

Davao Sanitarium and Hospital Clinic (June 1, 1966-1968), Davao Sanitarium and Hospital Urgent Health Care Center (May 1987-October 4, 1987), Davao Sanitarium and Hospital, Inc. (October 5, 1987-March 1992, June 6, 1997-May 22, 2005), Davao Adventist Hospital, Inc. (May 23, 2005-November 18, 2013), Adventist Hospital–Davao, Inc. (November 19, 2013- ).

## Leaders/Administrators

Davao Sanitarium and Hospital Clinic (1966-1968): Victoriano Montalban (SPUM President); Dr. Perfecto L. Llaguno, FICS (Clinic Doctor)

Davao Sanitarium and Hospital Urgent Health Care Center (January 1987-October 4, 1987)

Davao Sanitarium and Hospital, Inc.: Dr. Levi S. Pagunsan (President/Medical Director, October 5, 1987-September 1989);<sup>29</sup> Dr. Lemuel Lecciones (President, December 1989-March 1992); Pastor Paterno M. Diaz (Hospital Board Chairman, April-December 1992); Pastor Paterno M. Diaz (SPUC President, 1993); Dr. Gauvin O. Flores (Medical Director OIC, 1996); Pastor Ulysses M. Camagay (SPUC Treasurer, Hospital OIC, 1997)

## Presidents

Davao Sanitarium and Hospital, Inc.: Absalom S. Fronteras (June 1, 1997-September 16, 1998);<sup>30</sup> Dr. Perfecto L. Llaguno (September 17, 1998-July 31, 2003); Myra Lim-Mitra (August 2004-May 22, 2005)

Davao Adventist Hospital, Inc.: Myra Lim-Mitra (May 23, 2005-April 15, 2007); Dr. Geovanni A. Patalinghug (May 1, 2007-January 31, 2012); Dr. Edgar Claude A. Nadal (February 1, 2012-November 18, 2013)

Adventist Hospital – Davao, Inc.: Dr. Edgar Claude A. Nadal (November 19, 2013-January 31, 2016); Ellizer C. Navarro (April 1, 2016-July 31, 2018); Marijoe S. Pialago (October 1, 2018- )

## Medical Directors

Davao Sanitarium and Hospital, Inc.: Dr. Perfecto L. Llaguno (June 1997-February 2000); Dr. Benjamin S. Bibay (March 2000-December 2002); Dr. Geovanni Patalinghug (January 2003-22 May 2005)

Davao Adventist Hospital, Inc.: Dr. Geovanni Patalinghug (May 23, 2005-November 18, 2013)

Adventist Hospital – Davao, Inc.: Dr. Geovanni Patalinghug (November 19, 2013-January 2016); Dr. Kenneth T. Tandug (February 2016- )

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## NOTES

1. Adventist Hospital–Davao, Inc. 2020, Revision of Vision, Mission, and Core Values from Strategic Planning Document 2020.
2. Perfecto L. Llaguno, AHD pioneer, interview by Kervey O. Punay, Davao City, 26 February 2017. V. M. Montalban was president of the West Visayan Mission in 1964.
3. Perfecto L. Llaguno, "The Davao Sanitarium and Hospital," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, September 1966, 14-15.
4. P. L. Llaguno, interview by author, Davao City, February 26, 2017.
5. In 1984, Dr. Levi Pagunsan, the Medical Director of MSH in Iligan City came up with a brilliant idea of having an extension clinic in Davao City.
6. Merlyn L. Gersava, AHD pioneer, interview by Roselyn Magnetico, Davao City, May 4, 2020.
7. Victoria Lauron, Davao Mission administrative secretary, interview by Lenerie Dultra and Charity Rocaberte, Davao City, October 4, 2017.
8. A traditional Filipino system of mutual assistance in which members of a community work together to accomplish a difficult task (*Lexico Oxford Dictionary*, 2020, accessed December 11, 2020, <https://www.lexico.com/definition/bayanihan>).
9. Merlyn L. Gersava, pioneer nurse since 1987, interview by Kervey O. Punay, Davao City, July 15, 2020. Ms. Gersava confirmed that on June 6, 1997, the hospital passed the DOH inspection with a verbal authority to accept patients on that same day. The hospital celebrates its anniversary on June 6.
10. "Davao Sanitarium and Hospital," *Seventh-Day Adventist Yearbook* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1998), 508.

11. Ivy Charett Catolico-Robles, pioneer since 1997, interview by Kervey O. Punay, Davao City, July 14, 2020.
12. Davao Sanitarium and Hospital, Inc. 1997. Medical Record File 1997.
13. Ivy Charett Robles (since 1997), Aida Llamera, Honey Paglinawan (RM), and Helen Francisco, AHD pioneer nurses, interview by author, Davao City, July 14, 2020; Merlyn L. Gersava, interview by Kervey O. Punay, Davao City, July 14, 2020.
14. I. C. Robles, A. Llamera, H. Paglinawan, H. Francisco, and M. L. Gersava, interview by author, Davao City,, July 14, 2020.
15. I. C. Robles, A. Llamera, H. Paglinawan, H. Francisco, and M. L. Gersava, interview by author, Davao City, July 14, 2020.
16. P. L. Llaguno, interview by author, Davao City, February 26, 2017.
17. Board meeting minutes, June 15, 2004, Adventist Hospital–Davao Archives, Davao City, Philippines.
18. Department of Health (DOH) Licenses, 2007, Adventist Hospital – Davao, Inc. Archives.
19. Board meeting minutes, September 16, 2013, and December 10, 2013, Adventist Hospital–Davao Archives, Davao City, Philippines.
20. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Certificate, 2013, Adventist Hospital – Davao, Inc. Archives.
21. Corporate Goals in Strategic Planning Document, November 2-4, 2011, Davao Adventist Hospital, Inc.
22. DOH Licenses, 2017, Adventist Hospital Davao, Inc. Archives.
23. Board meeting minutes, January 28, 2016, Adventist Hospital–Davao Archives, Davao City, Philippines..
24. Board meeting minutes, September 18, 2018, Adventist Hospital–Davao Archives, Davao City, Philippines.
25. Board meeting minutes, February 26, 2018, Adventist Hospital–Davao Archives, Davao City, Philippines.
26. Board meeting minutes, March 15, 2016 (for the Hemodialysis Center), and February 16, 2017 (for the Chapel), Adventist Hospital–Davao Archives, Davao City, Philippines..
27. Marketing Health package, 2020, Adventist Hospital – Davao, Inc. Also Chris del Monte, *Mental Health Service*, (Adventist Hospital–Davao, Inc., 2020); *Pastoral Care Services* (Adventist Hospital–Davao, Inc., 2020).
28. M. L. Gersava, interview by author, May 4, 2020.
29. Human Resources, 201 File Archive, Adventist Hospital–Davao, Inc.

30. The names of the presidents are from the Human Resources, 201 File Archive, Adventist Hospital–Davao, Inc.

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