



Republic of the Philippines  
Department of Health  
**CENTER FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT**  
CaLaBaRZon

### **Executive Message**

Esteemed Participants and Guests!

Welcome to the historic "Safe Beginnings: 1st Regional Conference on Maternal and Child Health in CALABARZON," partnered with the esteemed 14th International Conference on MCH Handbook. United by our commitment to "Ensuring Universal Health Care and the 8-Point Action Agenda through Effective MCH Services and the MCH Handbook," we embark on a journey dedicated to the well-being of mothers and children.

Themed "Safe Beginnings," we emphasize the importance of skilled attendance during childbirth and access to healthcare facilities. Through the Handbook, mothers receive education on recognizing labor danger signs, enhancing childbirth safety, and reducing neonatal mortality rates. The consistent dedication of the CaLaBaRZon region towards progressive policies and effective implementation strategies for maternal and child health is commendable. It reflects a steadfast commitment to improving access to quality healthcare services and fostering a healthier environment for our mothers and children.

This conference is a dynamic platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration. Through workshops, symposiums, and interactive sessions, we explore the transformative power of health booklets, integrate personalized birth plans, enhance vigilance through information dissemination, and strengthen referral systems. We aim to foster global collaboration, showcase successful implementations, explore technological innovations, and empower communities towards safer pregnancies and childbirth.

Our collective commitment to advocacy and awareness campaigns will fortify the importance of maternal and child health, aligning with our goal of reducing maternal and neonatal deaths. Together, we champion the conference tagline, "Ensuring Universal Health Care and the Eight Point Action Agenda through Effective MCH Services and the MCH Handbook," paving the way for a healthier CALABARZON and beyond.

Sa Bagong Pilipinas, Bawat Buhay Mahalaga!

**ARIEL I. VALENCIA, MD, MPH, CESO III**  
Assistant Secretary of Health

## International Committee on Maternal and Child Health Handbook



We are pleased to welcome you to "Safe Beginnings: 1st Regional Conference on Maternal and Child Health (MCH) in Calabarzon in partnership with 14th International Conference on the MCH Handbook." This Conference is especially significant because it is the first time that the Philippines will be hosting this event.

The role of the MCH Handbook is to ensure continuum of care by supporting every pregnant woman and their families to experience healthy pregnancies and guarantee that all infants and young children develop optimally into adulthood. The MCH Handbook is a home-based record of essential information, kept by the family itself, to promote and maintain the health of mothers and children. The Handbook offers health information concerning pregnancy, delivery, and health care for new-born babies and young children. It includes vaccination records, growth charts and health education information. The MCH Handbook supports the integration of maternal, neonatal and child health services. The MCH Handbook program guarantees continuous and proper care for mothers and their children. We applaud the Philippine Department of Health's Eight-Point Action Agenda with the slogan, "Sa Healthy Pilipinas, Bawat Buhay Mahalaga" (In a Healthy Philippines, Every Life Matters).

The International Committee on the MCH Handbook has been supporting local and international conferences on the development, utilization, and expansion of the MCH Handbook since 1998. Professionals, experts, practitioners, policymakers and policy implementers, and other stakeholders have shared their knowledge and experience on MCH-related issues and activities.

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the Department of Health Center for Health Development Calabarzon (CHD4A) for spearheading "Safe Beginnings" in the Philippines. CHD4A's strong leadership and initiative led to us to the Philippines hosting this event for the first time. We thank the University of Philippines Manila for serving as the academic arm of the conference and for hosting the online streaming for our partners from around the world who cannot be with us here in Manila. We are also grateful to our partner organizations who provided their support.

To our dear speakers and participants in the Philippines and around the world, we are indebted to your dedication to our common cause. May "Safe Beginnings" foster the exchange of experiences and expertise on MCH and the MCH Handbook to strengthen our solidarity towards ensuring healthier mothers and children globally.

Maraming salamat po!

**Prof. Yasuhide Nakamura**

Chair

International Committee of MCH Handbook