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**SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.
AT THE CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH CELEBRATION**

[Delivered at the Philippine Children's Medical Center, Quezon Avenue Corner Agham Road in Quezon City | 10 September 2024]

Thank you, Sec. Ted Herbosa [*please take your seats*] for your kind introduction.

Joining us taking time away from the budget hearings, here is Speaker Martin Romualdez; of course, the host city of all of these grand facilities that we are trying to develop and will continue to develop, Mayor Joy Belmonte; the PCMC Executive Director Dr. Sonia Gonzalez; my fellow workers in government; the brave pediatric patients and their families, some of whom are here, I see --- basta't may mga bata talaga mas maganda ang pakiramdam natin lahat, especially when we know that we are able to do something for them to make them feel better; ladies and gentlemen, magandang umaga sa inyong lahat.

To be here at the Philippine Children's Medical Center, I am reminded that in a world characterized by power and strength, children teach us what true strength looks like.

We come here thinking that we need to be strong for them but, in reality, it is their strength that lifts us. It is their laughter, despite the pain. It is the courage that reminds us what it means to be human.

Here at the PCMC, those small frames and brave hearts show us that resilience is not about being unbreakable, but about bending without breaking. About getting back up when you fall.

This place, formerly called *Lungsod ng Kabataan*, was borne out of my parents' love for children and from their belief that children are this nation's greatest treasure. And I think especially in the Filipino culture that that is certainly the case not only with my parents, not only with the healthcare workers, but with every single family. After all, I think that all of us are unanimous in saying ang pinakamamahal natin sa buhay ang ating mga anak.

So when my parents established this institution, they understood that the future of our country rests on those whose innocence remain pure despite the adversities that they face. That they knew our children's welfare is the country's well-being.

They built this sanctuary not just for treatment, but for hope that every child, despite whatever diseases they are suffering from, can grow up to their full potential.

Forty-four years later, the PCMC remains true to that mission and continues to improve the quality of care and attention that it provides.

The reduction in treatment abandonment and the strengthened medical assistance for indigent patients are testaments to the dedication of all of you that work here.

While we have made great strides in children cancer care, we must also acknowledge that there is still a great deal that we need to do.

To our little warriors and their families: You are not alone in this fight. Hindi po kayo... Kami ay nandito po kasama ninyo at kabalikat ninyo na gagawin ang lahat upang tulungan ang inyong mga anak na maging malusog at maging malakas.

We stand with you, ensuring that quality healthcare, early diagnosis, necessary treatments, and medical assistance for indigent and financially incapacitated patients are accessible to you and to all.

The PCMC Legacy Tower, with its advanced capabilities for specialty care, shall be a beacon of hope for generations of children to come.

The newly installed diagnostic imaging machines—the 3 Tesla MRI, the 128-slice CT scan, and the Dynamic DR X-ray machine—they are not just shiny, new machines, new technologies; they are lifelines. They allow us to diagnose more quickly, treat more effectively, and give every child a fighting chance.

As early cancer diagnosis and prevention of treatment delays can significantly improve the quality of life for children with cancer, a precise diagnosis is crucial. That is why an additional PhP150,000,000 shall be given by the Office of the President, which we just handed over, to the PCMC for further equipment upgrading.

But beyond the new building and these new machines, it is the human spirit that will, ultimately, make the difference—the spirit that says that: We will not give up. We will keep fighting, no matter how hard the battle.

That is why I thank the men, women of PCMC— those of you in your white lab coats, who bear the invisible battle scars within you, and those who simply wear a smile and assist in whatever way they can to make these children's lives a little better—for remaining committed to the fight against children's cancer.

Your dedication is felt far beyond the halls of PCMC. Every patient, you are there, making a difference.

You remind us that quiet work carries the greatest impact, and that true strength is not about winning the fight but about never giving up.

If there is one thing I believe with all my heart, it is this: As long as places like this stand and people like you continue to give all that you can, hope will never run dry. It will shine through every day, every struggle, every challenge.

Every child who battles cancer, every family that stands with them, teaches us a powerful lesson: that life, no matter how fragile, is always worth fighting for.

In every small voice that I have heard today, in every brave smile that has crossed my path, I have seen a glimpse of that extraordinary courage that can move nations.

Sa lahat ng mga narito, lalo na sa mga pasyente at kanilang mga pamilya, maraming salamat po sa pagpapaalala sa amin na minsan, ang mga pinakamahihinang tinig ang nagpapamalas sa atin ng matinding kalakasan; na minsan, ang tanging kailangan natin ay tunay na pagmamahal at matibay na kalooban upang magpatuloy sa kabila ng lahat.

Maraming salamat sa inspirasyon, at sama-sama nating buuin ang isang mas malusog, matatag, at maginhawang Bagong Pilipinas para sa lahat!

Mabuhay ang ating mga kabataan! Mabuhay ang mga bayani ng Philippine Children's Medical Center! Maraming salamat sa inyong lahat at magandang umaga sa inyo. *[applause]*

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