

## Foundation offering ghost jobs to Europe

THE Philippine embassy in Bangkok is warning Filipinos of alleged illegal recruitment activities of Amarsa Foundation Philippines Inc.

In a statement, the Department of Foreign Affairs said the foundation allegedly charges P200,000 (roughly \$5,800) per person as payment for facilitating the recruit's entry into Europe as tourist, as well as in finding employment there.

Officials of Amarsa Foundation also allegedly package the recruits as cultural performers with scheduled appearances in selected European countries.

The embassy uncovered the illegal recruitment operation when a Filipina victim contacted and pleaded for embassy officials to rescue her and two others from a hotel where officials of the foundation allegedly brought them.

According to the Filipina, she was one of 10 recruits who arrived in Bangkok on April 28, together with the foundation's president and a woman who appeared to be the company secretary.

The recruits reportedly flew to Hong Kong on April 18 and left for Bangkok after being told by the president of the foundation that they will apply for their Schengen visas in Thailand.

However, upon arrival in Bangkok, the Filipina said Amarsa Foundation officials could not provide them with a definite schedule as to when they would be applying for their Schengen visas.

The officers also reportedly told them that they would now have to fly to Brazil, where they would pick up their visas. They were also asked to switch hotels several times without being told why.

Fearing for her safety and that of her companions, the Filipina decided to call the embassy in the afternoon of May 2. In the evening of the same day, a consular team rescued the Filipino recruits and brought them to the safety of the embassy grounds. *(Inquirer.net)*

## Patient-centered healthcare website launched

HEALTH experts are happy to note that patients are now taking a more active stakeholder role in the treatment of their medical conditions.

They ask more questions to their doctors and research more about their illnesses so they can participate in the decision-making process on what would be the best form of intervention or therapy suited for them.

This is the guiding principle behind the launching of a new locally attuned, patient-centered healthcare website.

Called the Patient Centricity website, it focuses on the importance of informed and empowered patients using the Internet as a medium.

Unlike other healthcare websites, the Patient Centricity website features stories of patients in a more comprehensive, easy to understand, and practical A to Z reference of disease and conditions.

"Patient Centricity lies at our company's core values of caring, curing, and improving lives," said Christine Liwanag, corporate affairs and market access director of Novartis Healthcare Philippines.

Some of the diseases included in the websites are Alzheimer's disease, attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), asthma, breast cancer and other forms of cancer, dengue, diabetes, high cholesterol, hypertension, osteoporosis, and tuberculosis.

Other than the diseases, it also features locally available prescription drugs as well as vaccines, other therapies and over-the-counter preparations.

It also provides useful information to guide patients in improving

access to various proven healthcare therapies.

"In designing the website, we were guided that well-informed patients can take a more active role in caring for their health," Liwanag said.

The website also features some of Novartis' undertakings with various international organizations and Filipino doctors in providing innovative medications to Filipino patients.

The website features the partnership with the Department of Science and Technology in holding the Biotechnology Leadership Camp (BioCamp).

BioCamp is an annual biotechnology workshop for young, promising Filipino scientists and researchers, who are given the opportunity to participate in the International BioCamp.

"We want to truly understand how patients cope with their diseases, how they interact with their doctors, and how the treatments help them," said Eric van Oppens, president and CEO of Novartis Healthcare Philippines.

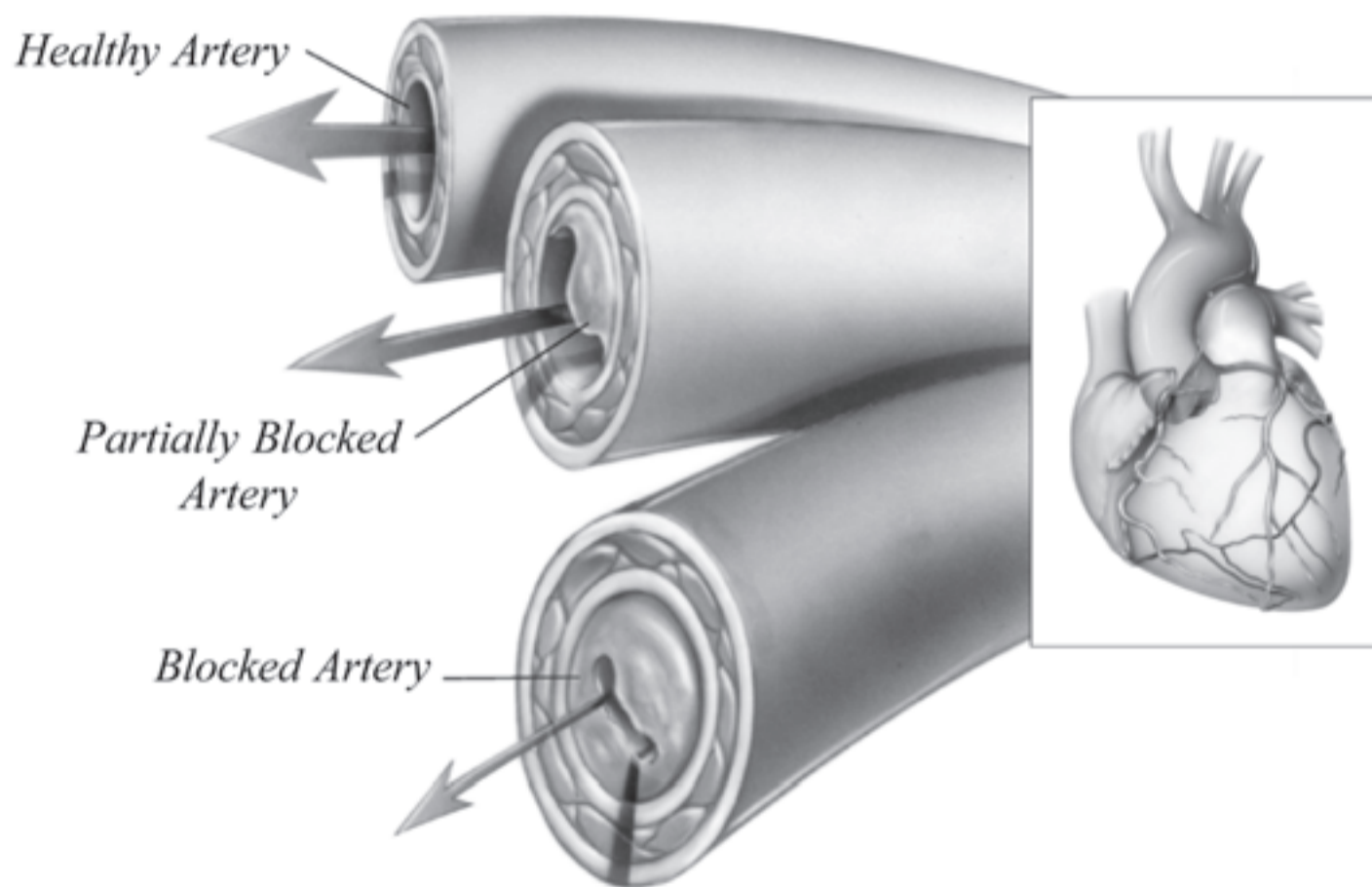
Novartis is one of the well-respected international companies noted for its corporate social responsibility. It puts a premium on research and development, on which improvement of patient care lies in the future.

Novartis Philippines, with the help of the World Health Organization, has already provided more than 80,000 treatments for malaria, assisted at least 1,000 cancer patients in 2003, and provided financial assistance to more Filipinos over the years.

In 2007 alone, the company's Glivec International Patient Assistance Program (GIPAP) provided benefits worth over P1.2 billion to Filipino patients. *(Inquirer.net)*

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# Danger: The First Signs



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- Sweating
- Nausea
- Shortness of breath

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