

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL HEALTH RESEARCH SYSTEM

**NATIONAL UNIFIED
HEALTH RESEARCH AGENDA
2008-2010**

2008

PREFACE

The National Unified Health Research Agenda (NUHRA) 2006-2010 launched in September 2006 provides research directions and areas where policy makers, funding and donor agencies and researchers from public and private sectors including the academe should invest to: enhance the health, environment, labor and social services sectors; ensure the health and productivity of the country's citizenry; and contribute to national development.

The NUHRA 2006-2010 was updated into NUHRA 2008-2010 which focused on unaddressed research topics that still require priority attention with new ones added in view of current and emerging concerns.

Sincere gratitude and appreciation are extended to the concerned agencies and stakeholders from the public and private sectors for their invaluable time and inputs in updating the NUHRA.

Research Management Committee
Philippine National Health Research System

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I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Rationale

The Philippine National Health Research System (PNHRS) launched the National Unified Health Research Agenda (NUHRA) in September 2006 to serve as the country's template for health research and development efforts specifying the areas and topics that need to be addressed for 2006-2010.

An updating of the NUHRA was undertaken during the mid-period of the five-year agenda to account for recent developments, new directions and thrusts of concerned agencies, and other health related initiatives. The updating provided the opportunity to refocus research priorities to better address existing health problems, emerging gaps, and new challenges.

Methodology

Updating the national agenda was based on a consultation process involving the public and private sectors and the different line agencies of the government. The updating was likewise anchored on the following initiatives: the Millennium Development Goals, updated Medium Term Philippine Development Plan, Fourmula One for Health Framework, National Science and Technology Plan, and the directions/thrusts of the concerned agencies.

The revision of the NUHRA involved updating and validation activities.

- Update on project implementation/priorities addressed

Coordination with the concerned agencies was done to obtain information on the status of the research priority topics in their respective areas, in particular what projects were implemented for the period 2006-2007. The agencies were asked to accomplish forms that dealt with the status of the NUHRA priority topics, projects implemented, priorities addressed, priorities that will remain as priorities for 2008-2010, and if there are new or additional priorities. Based on these submissions, a draft of the updated NUHRA was prepared.

- Validation

Separate consultative meetings with the concerned agencies and other stakeholders from the private and public sectors were held to present and validate the draft of the NUHRA, which include the updated list of research priorities. Apart from validation, the other stakeholders (i.e., from the academe, private sector to include non-government organizations) were asked to identify other health research priority topics not in the list but are considered to be of national importance.

The consultation activities were guided by the same considerations in the formulation of NUHRA 2006-2010, i.e., magnitude of health concern/problem; urgency; impact; inputs to policy development and enhancement; and improvement of delivery systems / programs.

Consultation meetings were held on May 7, June 6, 27, 2008 in Metro Manila for the updating and validation activities.

II. PRIORITIES

The updated NUHRA 2008-2010 is classified into major areas namely health financing, governance, health regulations, health service delivery, health technology development, health research ethics, and health information system. Priority research topics for 2008-2010 are enumerated under each major area.

HEALTH FINANCING

Health care financing system refers to various structures, methods, processes and procedures in which financial resources are made available to fund health sector activities, and how it is used on the delivery of health services. The purpose of health financing is to make funding available, to set the right financial incentives for providers, as well as ensure that all individuals have access to effective public health and personal health care. (WHO, 2000 in DOH, 2005a)

With increasing costs of health care, aggressive marketing of social health insurance, and growth of HMOs, health financing has become a major concern to ensure optimal mobilization of financial resources for health care. Health financing is one of the major programs under Fourmula One for Health Framework that aims to acquire better and sustained health investments and provide equitable services and improve health outcomes especially for the poor.

Priority Topics:

Feasibility study on the implementation of drug price reference index and diagnosis related groups

Development of incentive mechanisms for partners – health care providers, local government units (LGUs), etc

Assessment of Professional On Line Accreditation Renewal (POLAR) as an accreditation strategy

Actuarial study to support the development of a progressive and responsive contribution structure

Annual actuarial valuation of the National Health Insurance Program (NHIP) fund
Long-term (10 years) viability of the NHIP

Investment performance analysis / study for Treasury
Benefit incidence analysis: Health programs funds flow and utilization (series of studies)
Assessment of benefit packages and compensation
 Comprehensive benefit review plan
 Rabies benefit package
 Compensation study
 Support value survey
“Super cost center”: Cost benefit analysis on claims processing
Project evaluation of the quality improvement demonstration study (QIDS) for review
Provider satisfaction survey
Health seeking behavior and health facility utilization, cost of hospitalization, and health insurances of the household members
Systematic review of health financing for the informal sector: Enrollment programs and utilization schemes

GOVERNANCE

Governance in health refers to the management of political systems, public and financial management and accountability, and efficient delivery of services and other support systems to improve health status of populations. Governance also includes the enhancement of public and private partnerships in managing the health sector, building local capacities for technical leadership and management, knowledge management for improved decision making, and improving and retention of critical health personnel to promote and maintain the well being of the people (DOH, 2005a, 2005b).

As a component of the Fourmula One for Health Framework, the objectives of good governance are to are to improve health systems’ performance at the local and national levels with the introduction of interventions to improve governance and coordination across local health systems, enhance public and private partnership and improve national capacities to manage the health sector.

Priority Topics:

Data requirements, capacities and mechanisms for institutionalizing the LGU performance score card
Assessment of the primary health care approach as a reform strategy
Barriers to effective work performance of health providers
Performance Management System (PMS) effect on employees and organizational productivity in the DOH
Donor assistance contribution to health reform
Readiness and capacities of local government executives (LGEs) / LGUs in managing high financed investment for public health programs such as TB and other programs
Functional analysis and evaluation of DOH-Central Office Finance Service staff based on key financial management functions

Assessment of service delivery of LGUs vis-à-vis function of DSWD relevant to Local Government Code

Assessment of advocacy/preventive health care involving Barangay Health Workers (BHWs)

Wage standardization of nurses and midwives

Legality of inter local health zones (ILHZ) operations as an economic enterprise/corporate entity/cost sharing schemes

Functionality of health management systems (including its local health bodies/communities)

Health services utilization and customer satisfaction in inter-local health zones

Assessment of the implementation of the LGU scorecard to improve performance of local health authority

Health workers migration: Impact and cost on quality and availability of health service delivery and health outcomes

Human resource interventions impact evaluation

Assessment of RA 9184 "Government Procurement Reform Act" in health

LGU utilization and functionality of health information for decision making

Assessment of LGU programming of services on STD/HIV/AIDS in urban and rural setting

Assessment of the capacity of BHWs in reference to BHW Incentives Act

Systematic review on interventions to equalize distribution of health human resource

HEALTH REGULATIONS

Health regulation is the major function of government that ensures access to quality, effective, safe and affordable health care products, devices, facilities and services for the improvement and well being of the population, particularly the poor. Health regulation includes the setting up and monitoring of systems, standards, rules, and regulations and compliance. Health regulation also involves harmonizing, licensing, accreditation and certification of health products and services (DOH, 2005a, 2005b).

The objective of the health regulation component of the Fourmula One for Health framework is to assure access to quality and affordable health products devices, facilities and services, especially those needed by the poor. This can be achieved by making health regulation more rational and client responsive with new interventions and strategies and developing a seal of approval system to indicate the assured level of standard or competency, ensuring financial stability with the institution of programs and assuring the availability of low priced quality medicines, especially those used by the poor (DOH 2005b).

Priority Topics:

Identification and review of related regulatory policies and laws to strengthen health regulatory functions

Readiness/capacities of Centers for Health Development (CHD), LGUs and other organizations for regulatory functions

Quality control and quality assurance system of the Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD)

Client satisfaction at the Bureau of Quarantine

Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) implementation

Quality control and quality assurance system of BFAD: Critical capacities for Food and Drug Regulations Officers (FDROs) in ensuring effective and efficient quality monitoring of drugs in the local market

Harmonization and streamlining of hospital licensure system (One-Stop-Shop licensure and decentralization)

Analysis of the cost and health outcomes of DOH regulatory standards for primary health services like the *Senrong Sigla* and birthing facilities

Evaluation of the implementation of the Milk Code to include knowledge and attitudes of families, local officials, health personnel on the implementation of the Implementing Rules and Regulations

HEALTH SERVICE DELIVERY

Health service delivery involves the improvement of accessibility and availability of basic and essential health care for all Filipinos, particularly the poor. Health service delivery not only ensures the availability of health care providers of essential services in localities, but also designates providers of specific special services in localities and intensified public health programs in targeted localities (DOH 2005a, 2005b)

As specified in Fourmula One for Health Framework, the health service delivery component aims to improve the accessibility and availability of basic and essential health care for all, particularly for the poor, in both public and private facilities and services.

Priority Topics:

Disease Control and Prevention

(Encompasses concerns on communicable diseases, degenerative and lifestyle related disorders)

- Tuberculosis
 - Tuberculosis in vulnerable populations (prison, urban poor and TB in children)
 - Assessment of the utilization of the protocol for the management of pulmonary tuberculosis among children

- Malaria
 - Determining the relative burden of malaria in Palawan
 - Therapeutic efficacy and surveillance of anti-malarial drugs
 - Artemetherlumefantrine (Coartem) in the treatment of uncomplicated *P. falciparum* infection
 - Choloroquine and primaquine in the treatment of *P. vivax* infection

- Filariasis
Lot quality assurance survey in filariasis endemic provinces
- Schistosomiasis
School-based combined schistosomiasis and soil transmitted helminthiasis among preschool children in Agusan del Sur
- STD/HIV/AIDS
HIV prevalence and risk factors among the youth, men having sex with men, drug users
Ecologic and environmental factors that influence vulnerability to HIV infection
Operational research on vulnerability of urban men and boys to HIV/AIDS
HIV baseline data on most at risk populations (MARPs) and vulnerable populations
Evaluation of prevention programs for MARPs
Gap analysis in HIV prevention and control program (financial, logistics, and manpower)
Mapping of STD/HIV and AIDS initiatives in the Philippines from 1998 to 2008
- Leprosy
Use of transfer factor as immunotherapy for patients with leprosy reaction
- Rabies
Systematic review of rabies control programs: Outcomes of vector control
- Fish/shell borne diseases
Epidemiology of fish/shell borne diseases among coastal and lakeshore communities
- Degenerative and lifestyle disorders
Prevalence surveys on risk factors for non communicable diseases (NCDs), mental illness
Program assessment implementation (blindness, injuries, healthy lifestyle, NCDs)
Burden of NCDs (cancer, cardiovascular diseases-CVD, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease-COPD, diabetes mellitus and kidney disease)
Intervention study on best practices on the promotion of healthy lifestyle
- Mental health
Systematic review of community and health facility based interventions
- Others
Injury surveillance

Data analysis from surveillance data (e.g., Field Health Service Information System, National Epidemiology Center-FSHIS, NEC surveillance reports)

Occupational Health

Effects of harmful chemicals on workers from the farming, mining, maritime, and fishing sectors

Incidence of disease conditions (cancer, musculo-skeletal diseases, infections, asthma, hypertension, occupational dermatitis) in specific occupational cohort populations

Determination of top illnesses commonly claimed for compensation

Review of cancer registries for work-related cancer incidence

Psychological issues in call centers

Chemical safety practices in relation to use of persistent organic pollutants (POPs), Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS), other chemicals

Safety and health knowledge, attitudes, practices, occupational safety and health (OSH) needs of workers and managers: older workers, workers in informal sector, young workers, child labourers, disabled workers

Determine the effectiveness of interventions done for the different OSH programs:

- Work improvements in small manufacturing undertakings (e.g., battery recycling, woodwork, recycling of transmitters, garment, small transport business, home-based work)

Documentation of good practices in implementing OSH policies and programs for productivity

Environmental Health

Impact of mining extraction on water quality and biological components in selected river systems and lake basins

Biological indicators of environmental pollution of freshwater and marine water

Paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP) toxicity risk assessment: Accumulation and elimination of saxitoxin in green bay mussels (*Perna veridis*) using nuclear techniques

Historical profile of harmful algal cyst and anthropogenic inputs in sediment using isotopic technique

Isotope and chemical techniques application in water resources management and protection

Air pollution source apportionment by nuclear and related analytical techniques

Radiological assessment for release of technologically enhanced naturally occurring radioactive material (TENORM) into the environment

Biomass and carbon sequestration of selected tree species (regions 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 13)

Environmental health risk mapping (air, water quality data, etc.)

Health impacts of emissions from thermal destruction facilities

Health impact assessment and development of systems on environmental health

Study on the relationship between physical, geographical features (e.g. climate, hazes, flood, etc.) to occurrence of endemic diseases

Presence of hazardous chemicals known as endocrine disrupting substances in the Philippines

Protecting the environment, conserving biodiversity and managing natural resources to prevent the eventual loss of the remaining biodiversity and its environs and ensure food and environmental security

Management of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in relation to environmental health: Focus on the operation of power plants

Assessment on the effects of PCBs in selected areas

Determination of carrying capacities of various areas/sites for resources conservation, ecotourism and sustainable development

Impacts and adaptation strategies to climate change in coastal ecosystem

Households having safe drinking water and sanitary type of toilet facilities

Nutrition

Nutrition and health surveys (anthropometric, biochemical, clinical, dietary)

Food quality and safety program (e.g. trans fatty acid content of processed foods)

Development of nutrition tools and standards for overweight, obesity, predictor of risk

Relationship of nutrition and lifestyle-related disorders/conditions (non-communicable diseases)

Meta analysis of the various causal factors of malnutrition

Factors affecting the nutritional status of undernutrition among 0-5 years old children

Formative research on the factors affecting nutritional status of female adolescents aged 13-19 years

In-depth study of the factors affecting well-nourished and undernourished children with the same economic status

Indicators for the establishment of a local nutrition early warning system (LNEWS)

Effective nutrition for school age children

Formative research to determine effective nutrition intervention for adolescents

Cost effective nutrition interventions for school age children

Best practices on child care for well nourished children 0-5 years old from poor households

Success factors on impact of livelihood assistance programs in health and nutrition

Impact evaluation of nutrition programs (Accelerated Hunger Mitigation Program, Food for School Program, Growth Monitoring and Promotion, Supplementary Feeding Programs, Infant and Young Child Feeding, *Pabasa sa Nutrisyon*)

Effective mix of nutrition strategies for behaviour change

Assessment of the Barangay Nutrition Scholar Program

Family Health

Child maternal health and pregnant women: effectiveness of maternal death reviews, perceptions of mothers to health centers/public facilities food preferences, patterns of pregnant women: Health promotion strategies

Child caring practices of poor households (positive deviance approach)

A rapid assessment of public health programs on maternal and child health services in priority areas and Fourmula 1 sites of the country

Knowledge and use of family planning methods

Contraceptive use, discontinuation and switching behavior in the Philippines

Operation research on natural family planning

Economic evaluation of LGU contraceptives program to respond to unmet need of family planning

Effectiveness of pre-marriage counseling as a strategy of family planning and responsible parenting

Sexual and reproductive vulnerabilities of young professionals in call centers

Adolescent health: Teenage pregnancy in highly urbanized setting, profiling and evaluation of teen centers and services

Common factors leading to teenage pregnancy in Metro Manila and selected cities of the country

Evaluation of services provided to teenagers in selected teen centers in Metro Manila and in other parts of the country

Health and nutrition of children less than 5 years old

Child illnesses and mortality

Study on violence against children in selected public schools

Core competencies of caregiving in child-caring institutions

Baseline study on the psychosocial and environmental factors affecting knowledge, attitude, practices, on early childhood and development and selected child related problems in 6 disparity areas

Research on the economics of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD)

Study on the cultural and traditional practices of indigenous people in relation to state standards on the protection of the rights of children

A national situation analysis of children and families of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs)

Impact study on the effectiveness of the programs and services for children in conflict with the law (CICL) and their families, center, and community-based

Best practices of child – friendly communities

A documentation of indigenous children involved in armed conflict

Comparative study on the effectiveness of residential care and foster care

Impact evaluation of the National Plan of Action for Children (NPAC)

Evaluating the data collection system for children victims of natural disasters

Health care practices among vulnerable populations

Study on the implementation of family-related laws: RA 8977 (Solo Parent Act; RA 8552, RA 8353; Family Code of the Philippines

Systematic review of health interventions on domestic violence for childbearing women 15-49 years old

Health Emergencies and Disasters

Comparative study of emergency responses to various natural and human generated disasters

Evaluation of the “National Policy on Management of the Dead and Missing Persons during Disaster”

Review of Philippine disasters from 2000-2008

Assessment of LGU hospitals’ capacity in managing mass casualty incidents

Review of community early warning systems

Vulnerability of selected watersheds (assessment and for mitigation / management of calamities)

Assessment of the capacity in emergency preparedness and response (EPR) to biological, chemical, radioactive, and nuclear (BCRN) incidents

Other Public Health Concerns (Health Education)

Poverty alleviation studies

(Causes and measurements of poverty to include among others the children, the disabled, elderly, people in depressed communities, etc.)

Studies on the reintegration process of migrant workers (including health workers/ professionals)

Effect of urbanization (influence of education) on health

Manpower demand and supply studies (including those in health)

Comprehensive review of the regulatory function affecting higher education sub-sector (including health education)

Evaluation of graduate education program (including health education program)

Analysis of the higher education performance indicators (including health education program)

Impact of the international practicum training program on employability of graduates (to include practicum program for health-related programs)

HEALTH TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

The development of safe, effective and affordable technologies for health care and delivery of services is the main thrust of research and development. The Traditional and Alternative Medicine Act of 1997 is one law that explicitly encourages the pursuit of researches on traditional and alternative health care systems to enhance the delivery of health services especially for the poor. Moreover, the country’s wealth in both terrestrial and marine resources provide the ideal resources that can be tapped for the development of essential drugs, vaccines and therapeutics, functional food and nutritional products and personal care products.

Health technology development is envisioned to support health services delivery with the provision of evidence based technologies that are safe, appropriate, and accessible to address urgent health needs and at the same time support growth of small and medium scale entrepreneurs on health bioindustry.

Priority Topics:

Vaccines

Development of vaccines for priority diseases (e.g. schistosomiasis, influenza)

Development of edible vaccines for diarrheal diseases and rabies

Diagnostic Kits

Development of diagnostic kits for priority diseases

Drugs

Development of essential /off patent drugs

Therapeutics

Therapeutics/ alternatives for treatment of cancer, CVD, diabetes, dengue, pneumonia, diarrhea, occupational health hazards, COPD, kidney disease, and emerging infections

Radiation modification of carrageenan for biomedical and other applications

Semi-commercial production of polyvinyl pyrrolidone (PVP) - carrageenan hydrogel for wound dressing

Development of honey wound dressing for health care management

Production of radio-labeled compounds for receptor binding assay

Medicinal Plants / Herbal Medicine

Development of herbal drugs for priority diseases

Development of remedies for hyperuricemia, malaria, and tuberculosis

Studies on curative capability of medicinal plants

Documentation of indigenous practices in the use of medicinal plants for disease intervention

Fortified Products

Technology development for production of fortified foods

Functional Foods

Development of functional foods

(virgin coconut oil, yacon, coconut flour, malunggay, ginger)

Development of ginger products for hypoglycemic and cholesterol lowering effect

Production of turmeric microcapsules and tablet

Personal Care

Efficacy and safety of virgin coconut oil as natural antimicrobial and moisturizing ingredient in personal care products

Improved formulation of natural mosquito repellent lotion (essential oils)

Food safety

Food irradiation (to improve quality and shelf life of food and agricultural by-products)

Others

Comet assay: A microgel electrophoretic technique for the detection of DNA damage and repair in individual cells

Establishment of protocol for the analysis of blood by total-reflection X-ray fluorescence spectrometry

Development of ^{99m}Tc generator, ^{99m}Tc radiopharmaceuticals and ^{99m}Tc radio labeled compounds for medical application

Development of thermoluminescent detectors for radiation dosimetry (for use by patients and radiation workers)

Studies on techniques for trace analysis of elements in food specifically those having health/medical impact

HEALTH RESEARCH ETHICS

The integrity of the health research process is a fundamental requirement for health research. Research activities involving human subjects must uphold the rights and dignity of persons and not be prejudicial to any group or individual by reason of race, creed, age, gender, occupation or health status. A research protocol needs ethical clearance to ensure that the implementation of research involving human participants or human specimens is beneficial to the population, respects the rights and dignity of participants, does no harm to the participants, properly informs and voluntarily solicits the consent of participants to be part of the research activity.

Although the practice of observing ethics in the conduct of health research is strongly advocated, the need to conduct researches on the practice of health research ethics and related concerns has also been raised. Ethics in health research needs to account for Filipino culture, norms and traditions. Similarly, studies on the ethics of health research should also examine the practice of ethics in health research in the country.

Priority Topics:

Researchers and subjects' understanding of the principle of informed consent

Researchers understanding of risk benefit assessment

State of equitable distribution of benefits and burdens in health research


Impact of traditional practices and healers on ethical guidelines or vice versa

Attitudes of health researchers towards ethical and technical review

Incidence of deviation from approved protocols and their consequences

Incidence and nature of adverse events encountered in researches

Assessment of complications arising from diagnostic procedure conducted with a foreign co-investigator



Assessment of risks involved in externally funded research
Validity of the informed consent process
Ethics of mass treatment in the control of certain diseases (e.g. schistosomiasis and filariasis)
Level of awareness of basic ethics
Assessment /review of institution based researches (compliance with ethics guidelines)
Review of legal policies and laws governing research ethics and deviations and/or cases of violations
Issues in externally funded research
Compliance of researchers on ethical practice
Post study / follow up monitoring of participants after clinical drug trials
Perceptions, attitudes and behavior of research participants

HEALTH INFORMATION SYSTEMS

A functional and effective information system is one of the main ingredients for relevant health planning, decision-making, policy formulation and conduct of researches. The establishment of a health information system is needed for good governance under the Fourmula One Framework for Health Reforms. A health information system thus should be able to provide relevant and quality information to support evidence based activities.

Priority Topics:

Mapping of health resources (human, physical, equipment, supplies) down to the barangay level
Tobacco surveillance system
Development of national health data dictionary for claims simplification and streamlining
Enhancement / Development of a health research information system



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ANNEX A

LIST OF PARTICIPATING AGENCIES IN THE NUHRA UPDATING

Government Agencies

Commission on Higher Education

- Office of Policy, Planning, and Research Information

Commission on Population

Council for the Welfare of Children

Department of Environment and Natural Resources

- Environmental Management Bureau
- Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau

Department of Labor

- Occupational Safety and Health Center

Department of Health

- Bureau of Local Health Development (BLHD)
- Bureau of Quarantine (BQ)
- Health Human Resource Development Bureau (HHRDB)
- Health Policy Development and Planning Bureau (HPDPB)
- Health Emergency Management Service (HEMS)
- Information Management Service (IMS)
- National Center for Disease Prevention and Control (NCDPC)
- National Center for Health Facilities Development (NCHFD)
- National Nutrition Center (NNC)
- Philhealth
- Philippine Institute of Traditional and Alternative Healthcare (PITAHC)
- Philippine National AIDS Council (PNAC) Secretariat
- Center for Health Development 8

Department of Science and Technology

- Food and Nutrition Research Institute
- Industrial Technology and Development Institute
- Philippine Council for Health Research and Development
- Philippine Council for Industry and Energy Research and Development
- Philippine Nuclear Research Institute

Department of Social Welfare and Development



National Economic and Development Authority

National Statistics Office

Union of Local Authorities in the Philippines (ULAP)

Academe

Manila Central University

Social Development Research Center, De La Salle University

University of the Philippines Manila

Non-government organizations

Demographic Research and Development Foundation

Health Action Information Network

Foundation for the Advancement of Clinical Epidemiology

Institute for Social Studies and Action

Philippine NGO Council on Population Health and Welfare Inc.

Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement

Plan International

USC Office of Population Studies Foundation (Cebu City)

Industry

Glaxosmithkline Phils.

UNILAB

Wyeth Philippines

Pascual Laboratories

Professional societies

Philippine Nurses Association (PNA)

Industrial Pharmacists Association (IPAP)

Philippine Association of Medical Technologists (PAMET)

Donor

Health Policy Development Program, USAID

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL HEALTH RESEARCH SYSTEM

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