

# Phase-out of Mercury in Health Care: Challenges and Solutions

- **Faye V. Ferrer** Health Care Without Harm
  - DOH Administrative Order 21 (AO21)
- **Ms. Ester Borja** – Philippine Heart Center
  - Challenges in Substitution
- **Atty. Richard Gutierrez** – Ban Toxics
  - Challenges in Storage
- **Merci Ferrer** – Health Care Without Harm
  - Towards a mercury free health care by 2010 and beyond



Faye V. Ferrer

Health Care Without Harm

Southeast Asia

[www.noharm.org.ph](http://www.noharm.org.ph)

[www.mercuryfreehealthcare.org](http://www.mercuryfreehealthcare.org)



eliminate  
environmental  
mercury pollution  
in health care  
practices without  
compromising  
safety or care.

# Why the Focus on Mercury?

- **High Toxicity Via Multiple Routes**
- **Potential for Exposure – Employees, Patients, Public, Environment**
- **Numerous Sources and Uses in Health Care**
- **Spill Prevention**
- **Liability and Disposal Cost Avoidance**
- **Alternatives are AVAILABLE**

# Mercury Exposure

- Vapor from elemental form
- Dermal from inorganic salts, phenyl mercury
- Methyl mercury from Fish


# Health Effects

- Primarily a Neurotoxin, CNS and peripheral
- Gingival, eyes, lungs, skin
- Kidneys and G-I tract
- Fetus - multiple effects including mental retardation, blindness, microcephaly, cerebral palsy, swallowing disturbances

# Treatments

- Chelating agents
- Oral Resin (for ingestion)
- Hemodialysis (L-cysteine)
- CNS damage from MeHg  
permanent, no treatment,  
irreversible!
- **PREVENTION IS STILL BEST!**

# What can be done?

- Increase public awareness
  - Conserve power
  - Reduce consumption, recycle, and properly dispose of mercury-containing product
  - Find Substitutes
  - Find appropriate storage
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- The background of the slide is a solid blue color. In the lower right quadrant, there are several decorative elements consisting of concentric circles, resembling ripples in water or a target pattern. These circles are lighter in shade than the background and are arranged in a cluster.



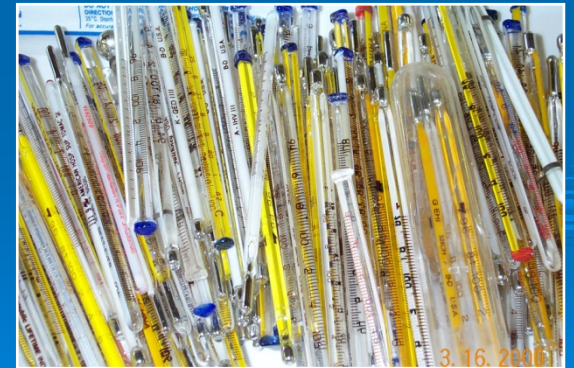
## Intentional

- **Thermometers**
- **Sphygmomanometers**
- **Thermostats**
- **Dental amalgams**
- **Medical devices**
- **Lab chemicals**
- **Preservatives**
- **Batteries, fluorescent lamps**

## Unintended Contaminant

- **Bleach**
- **Soaps & detergents**
- **Water treatment chemicals**
  - **sodium hydroxide**
  - **sulfuric acid**

# Mercury containing items in health care



# Gradual Phase-out of Mercury in Philippine Health Care

DOH Administrative Order 2008-0021



# General Provisions

1. All Hospitals shall **IMMEDIATELY** discontinue the distribution of mercury thermometers to patients through distribution of hospital admission/discharge kits.
2. All Hospitals shall **FOLLOW GUIDELINES** for the gradual phase-out of mercury in two-years time.

# General Provisions

3. All new Health Care Facilities applying for a License to Operate shall submit an **INVENTORY** of all mercury-containing devices in their facility and a corresponding **MERCURY MINIMIZATION PROGRAM**
4. **ALL OTHER** Health Care Facilities other than hospital shall make a Mercury Minimization Program.



**R.I.P**

**MERCURY-USE  
IN THE  
PHILIPPINE  
HEALTH CARE SYSTEM**

Date of Death  
**Sept. 28, 2010**

**MERCURY-FREE  
HEALTH CARE  
BY 2010**

**DOH ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 21 (A021)**

**THE GRADUAL PHASE-OUT OF MERCURY IN HEALTH CARE**

was signed by DOH Secretary Francisco T. Duque III and put into effect last Sept. 28, 2008, paving the way for a two-year phase-out of common medical devices that use toxic mercury. For more information, please visit [www.noharm.org](http://www.noharm.org).

(LOGO)  
**GENERAL SANTOS  
DOCTORS HOSPITAL**



**DOH**

