

AIHA Learning Exchange Focuses on Strengthening Ophthalmology Services at Philippine General Hospital



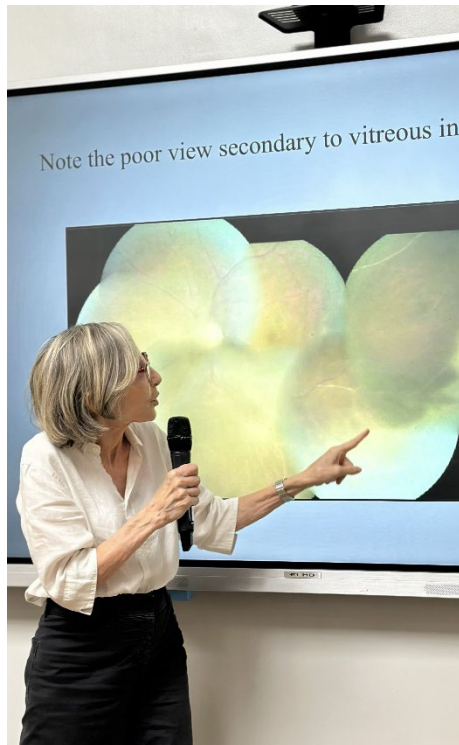
NYC Health + Hospitals / Elmhurst Ophthalmologist and surgical retina specialist Dr. Ronni Lieberman traveled to Philippine General Hospital to provide targeted technical training as part of AIHA's Dr. Joseph R. Masci Legacy Project.

The Philippine General Hospital (PGH) recently welcomed Dr. Ronni Lieberman, an ophthalmologist and surgical retina specialist at NYC Health + Hospitals / Elmhurst in New York City, as part of the American International Health Alliance's (AIHA) [Dr. Joseph R. Masci Legacy Project](#).

During her three-day visit from July 6 to 8, 2026, Dr. Lieberman conducted a series of lectures for healthcare professionals, including infectious disease (ID) consultants, adult and pediatric ID fellows-in-training, medical residents, and ophthalmology consultants and residents. Her lectures focused on HIV-related eye diseases, ophthalmic manifestations of systemic diseases, and pediatric eye diseases, providing participants with current knowledge that can be directly applied to their clinical practice.

An important component of the visit was a series of hands-on workshops on direct ophthalmoscopy and the use of a fundus camera – a specialized low-power microscope with an attached camera used to take high-resolution photographs of the interior surface of the eye, including the retina, optic disc, macula, and blood vessels.

“These sessions provided an opportunity for fellows to refresh and strengthen their fundamental ophthalmoscopy skills while gaining practical knowledge on the appropriate use of the fundus camera,” said Dr. Christine Ramos, a medical specialist at PGH's Division of Infectious Diseases and the hospital's HIV Treatment Hub (SAGIP).



During the visit, Dr. Lieberman delivered lectures and clinical practice exercises on a broad range of topics, including:

- Infectious Retinitis in HIV
- Ocular Manifestations of Systemic Disease
- Principles of Direct Ophthalmoscopy
- Endophthalmitis and Ocular Syphilis
- Principles of Fundus Photography (including a live demo on camera operation and interpretation of HIV-related retinal findings)
- Recognition and Management of Pediatric Ocular Infections, including HIV-related (CMV, TB, Toxoplasmosis)
- Live demo on performing direct ophthalmoscopy for 2nd year fellows

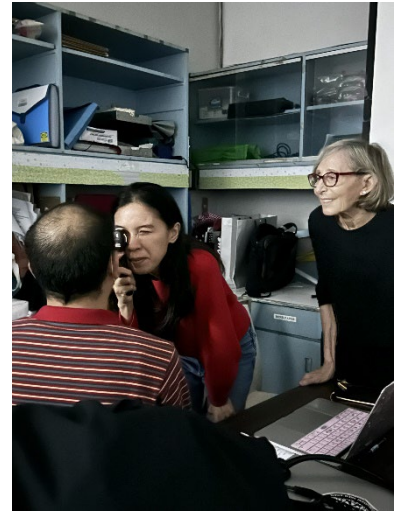
“This is particularly timely as PGH prepares to acquire a fundus camera, which is expected to facilitate faster, more efficient, and more comprehensive assessment of patients with ocular manifestations of systemic and infectious diseases,” Dr. Ramos explained.

The visit provided a valuable opportunity for knowledge exchange, skills development, and strengthening of collaboration among PGH’s ID, Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, and Pediatric services.

In particular, the visit “had a direct and meaningful impact on patients of the SAGIP Unit and patients were grateful for the opportunity to be assessed and managed by an ophthalmology expert,” Dr. Ramos continued, noting that their positive experience highlighted the value of multidisciplinary and specialized care for people living with HIV.

PGH fellows and consultants expressed their deep appreciation for the knowledge, practical skills, and clinical insights shared by Dr. Lieberman throughout the three-day visit.

“Beyond the formal lectures and workshops, Dr. Lieberman’s interaction with the different clinical groups provided an opportunity to strengthen professional relationships and encourage continued collaboration between our Infectious Diseases and Ophthalmology Departments, Dr. Ramos said.



Hands-on exercises designed to train physicians and help them hone their clinical skills and expertise played an important part in Dr. Lieberman's visit to Philippine General Hospital.

“Overall, PGH is deeply honored and grateful to the American International Health Alliance for facilitating Dr. Lieberman's visit and for providing this important opportunity for professional development and knowledge exchange,” said Dr. Ramos, who concluded by saying:

“Dr. Lieberman's expertise and generosity have contributed significantly to strengthening the clinical capabilities of our healthcare teams and enhancing patient-centered care and we look forward to sustaining and further strengthening this collaboration with Dr. Lieberman and AIHA – all with the shared goal of advancing multidisciplinary education, clinical practice, and the quality of care available to our patients at PGH.”

AIHA launched the [Dr. Joseph R. Masci Legacy Project](#) in September 2024 with support from Dr. Masci's family. Through this project, AIHA's technical assistance approach at [Debre Berhan Comprehensive Specialized Hospital](#) (DB) in Ethiopia and [Philippine General Hospital](#) (PGH) in Manila is based on key priorities and needs identified by these hospitals. Dr. was an infectious disease specialist and public health leader who spent more than 40 years working to improve the lives of patients in New York City and around the world. He was also a highly valued AIHA partner who spearheaded multi-year twinning partnerships to improve HIV/AIDS care in Ethiopia and Russia. Dr. Lieberman also played an important role in both these partnerships.