

ANNUAL REPORT

2019

Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012

QUICK FACTS

- Two million Filipinos are added to the population every year.
- Majority of the regions in the country have fertility levels which are higher than the national average of 2.7 children.
- Children below 15 years of age continue to form the base of the country's population age structure.
- Women having more children than they wanted indicates a high unmet need for family planning.
- An estimated 538 babies are born to Filipino teenage mothers every single day, according to Philippine Statistical Authority (2017).
- The United Nations¹ has estimated that, for "every dollar spent in family planning, between two and six dollars can be saved in interventions aimed at achieving other development goals".

¹ What would it take to accelerate fertility decline in the least developed countries? New York (NY): United Nations Population Division; 2009. Available from: http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/UNPD_policybriefs/UNPD_policy_brief1.pdf. Last accessed May 21, 2020.

OVERVIEW

The 2019 Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Law Accomplishment Report was prepared by the Department of Health (DOH) and the Commission on Population and Development (POPCOM), with technical assistance from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), through the ReachHealth Project implemented by the Research Triangle Institute (RTI).

It is a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of the programs under the RPRH Law, summarizing the efforts and accomplishments of key stakeholders and partners over the course of one year. It also provides recommendations for executive and legislative actions to address barriers and improve implementation of the RPRH Law for 2020 and beyond.

Major highlights of the 2019 Annual Report are:

- Enactment of the DOH and POPCOM Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) 2019-01 which clarified the roles of both agencies in the implementation of the Family Planning program;
- Gradual reduction of maternal mortality ratio linked to increased utilization of maternal health care services;
- Improvement in Fully-Immunized Child coverage from 66 percent in 2018 to 69 percent in 2019;
- Increase in the modern contraceptive prevalence rate among married women of reproductive age (from 25 percent in 2017 to 27.7 percent in 2019)²;
- Declining incidence of live births among adolescents 15 to 19 years old. However, there is an increasing trend in live births among the younger adolescents 10 to 14 years of age;³
- Increase in STD and HIV/AIDS care facilities and treatment hubs across the country; and
- Increase in the number of local mechanisms that respond to cases related to violence against women and children.

² Field Health Service Information System (FHSIS) of the DOH. Note: While the FHSIS data showed a higher modern contraceptive prevalence rate, there are still challenges in gathering FHSIS reports from the LGUs.

³ Philippine Statistical Authority

Maternal, Newborn, Child Health and Nutrition

STATUS AND TRENDS

- Data from the Field Health Service Information System (FHSIS) show an increase in utilization of maternal health care services, namely antenatal care, facility-based delivery, skilled birth attendance, and post-partum visits, over the past five years. While antenatal and post-partum care rates have been decreasing from 2015 to 2018, both indicators increased in 2019. Due to improvements in maternal health care service indicators, maternal mortality ratio reduction slowly improved over the years.
- In terms of the Fully-Immunized Child Coverage, 2019 saw an increase from 66 percent in 2018 to 69 percent in 2019.

INTERVENTIONS

- DOH has funded the upgrading of rural health units and barangay health stations for Basic Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care as well as hospitals for Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric Care and Newborn Care. Moreover, a total of 22,730 health professionals have been trained and deployed especially in hard-to-reach areas to provide better maternal care.
- During the year, the “*Kalusugan at Nutrisyon ng Magnanay Act*” was fully implemented as well as the “*Sabayang Patak Kontra Polio*” and the “*Measles Outbreak Response and Prevention of Transmission in School*”.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Accurate measurement of maternal mortality remains an enormous challenge for DOH. DOH will review current reporting tools and systems vis-a-vis the workload of primary care health professionals tasked to gather and collate field data.
- The persistent issues on poor antenatal care and post-partum care should inform the design of demand generation activities anchored on social and behavior change communication approaches. The same should also be pursued to assist people on how to protect children from infectious diseases, particularly measles.

2 Family Planning

STATUS AND TRENDS

- The FHSIS reported that 7,753,528 women of reproductive age used modern family planning methods in 2019 of which 338,674 were new acceptors. However, this only reflects FP figures from the public sector.
- While current use and drop-outs improved in 2019, the number of new acceptors remained flat over the years. Based on the National Demographic Health Survey (NDHS), health concerns and fear of side effects remain as the most common reasons for non-acceptance and dropping out of a method, respectively.

INTERVENTIONS

- Demand generation activities during the year reached a total of 1,886,505 couples and individuals. These activities generated a total of 365,215 identified unmet need for family planning of which 258,459 (70%) were referred and served.
- DOH, with support from USAID, facilitated Level 1 and 2 FP Competency-Based Trainings for 496 health service providers assigned in public and private hospitals, rural health units, and public and private lying-in clinics. Of this, 125 health service providers were trained in PSI insertion and removal and 21 health service providers on postpartum intrauterine device.
- A Procurement Supply Chain Management (PSCM) National Strategic Plan has been drafted and a PSCM Team established and is now fully functional.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- To address the challenges in FHSIS reporting, the FP Estimation Tool will be used to monitor FP indicators. Data quality needs to be strengthened.
- There is a need to strengthen the coordination among PSCM stakeholders; strengthen institutional and human resource capacity at all levels to manage PSCM functions; streamline and harmonize supply chain information systems; establish a data-use culture; and synchronize demand and supply systems.
- A behavior change communication campaign can be designed to address “health concerns and fear of side effects” to improve acceptance and adherence to FP methods.

3 Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health

STATUS AND TRENDS

- Data from the Philippine Statistics Authority show that the incidence of live births among adolescents 15 to 19 years old has declined from 2016 to 2018. However, there is an increasing trend in live births among the younger adolescents 10 to 14 years of age. The reported births from adolescent mothers aged 10 to 14 in 2019 were most prevalent in Region III, Region XI, and Region XII.
- Young people continue to be at risk of Human Immuno Deficiency Virus or HIV. The 15 to 24 years old age group comprise 30 percent of all HIV cases.

INTERVENTIONS

- DOH focused on the accreditation of barangay/rural health centers as Adolescent-Friendly Health Facilities (AFHFs) in all regions. Currently, the country has a total of 704 adolescent-friendly health facilities.
- POPCOM established 44 information and service delivery networks (ISDNs) catering to the information, counselling and services needs of adolescents. There are now a total of 128 functional and maintained ISDNs in the country.
- Through the adolescent-friendly health facilities, a total of 345,522 adolescents availed of sexual and reproductive health services in health facilities in 2019.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Efforts of various agencies to address the issues of teenage pregnancy in the country remain fragmented and stand to benefit from a unified Strategy on Teenage Pregnancy.
- There is a need to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the ASRH situation in the country to guide the design of service delivery and capacity building interventions, with particular focus on areas where unmet need for ASRH is highest. Additionally, there is a need to generate data for the 10 to 14 age group in order to understand the breadth and depth of the ASRH issues, and thus come up with strategic interventions addressing the same.

4 STIs and HIV/AIDS

STATUS AND TRENDS

- The HIV/AIDS and antiretroviral treatment or ART Registry of the Philippines (HARP) is seeing a steady increase in the number of daily new diagnosed cases from 2014 to 2019. In December 2019, the average daily diagnosed HIV cases was pegged at 35. This is more than double the 16 cases per day reported in 2014. The 25 to 34 age group makes up 50 percent of all cases. This is followed by the 15 to 24 years old at 30 percent.

INTERVENTIONS

- DOH focused on increasing access to HIV/AIDS related services such as the establishment of additional HIV Primary Care Facilities and Treatment Hubs across key geographic locations. By the end of 2019, there was an increase of 53 percent in care facilities, and an increase of 59 percent in treatment hubs across the country compared to 2018.
- As of December 2019, a total of 42,731 people living with HIV were initiated on ART. This is an increase of 27 percent from the 2018 figures.
- Additionally, although the supply of HIV/AIDS commodities hit critical levels, there were no stock-outs of HIV/AIDS commodities during the reporting period.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- HIV testing continues to be stigmatized which presents a barrier to people living with HIV getting appropriate treatment. There is a need for stronger advocacy and evidence-based interventions to elicit sought-after behavioral changes especially among people at risk of the infection such as increased condom use among men who have sex with men, and transgender women, increased uptake of Pre-exposure Prophylaxis, testing, early treatment and treatment adherence.
- Funding from the public sector as well as international organizations for the HIV/AIDS national response is declining and this will pose challenges in the implementation of programs. Domestic resource mobilization must be increased.

5 Elimination of VAWC Violence against Women and Children

STATUS AND TRENDS

- Since 2008, the NDHS has consistently established that VAW reporting is extremely low. In 2017, for instance, NDHS results show that only 34 percent of those who have experienced physical or sexual violence sought help. When asked who they approached for help, 93 percent said they reached out to family members, friends, or neighbors. Only six percent claimed to have reported to the police.

INTERVENTIONS

- Over time, there has been an increase in the number of local mechanisms that respond to VAWC cases. As of 2019, 87 percent of all cities and 83 percent of all municipalities have established Local Committee on Anti-Trafficking and Violence Against Women and Children. At the provincial level, 70 percent of all provinces of the country have already established their Provincial Committee Against Trafficking and Violence Against Women and their Children.
- The DOH's Women and Children Protection Program reported that as of 2019 there was a total of 120 women and children protection units operating in 57 provinces and 10 chartered cities in the country.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The unified registry of cases remains to be one of the primary concerns of stakeholders. The Inter-Agency Council on Violence Against Women and Children will continue to conduct coordination meetings and field test enhanced forms towards setting-up a unified registry of cases in the country.
- Access to services is still limited, thus there is a need for the coordinated referral mechanisms to address various needs of gender-based violence survivors. Interventions such as education and information on how to prevent violence must be prioritized.

POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

- One of the most important policies that was enacted this year was the DOH and POPCOM Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) 2019-01 which clarified the roles of both agencies in the implementation of the Family Planning program in the country.

BUDGET AND FINANCING

- The 2019 DOH and POPCOM budget decreased by 37 percent from its 2018 budget allocation (Php 41.84 billion to Php 26.32 billion). The decrease was largely due to the shift to cash-based budgeting for 2019 that led to the adjustment of budget ceilings of programs.¹
- The HIV/AIDS national response experienced a 40 percent decrease in the budget, from Php 1.173 billion to Php 459.61 million. External funding, or support from international sources, had also seen a steady decline since 2013.
- Compared to 2018, the expenditures of the LGUs for FP related programs, projects and activities decreased by about 17 percent from last year's Php 2.27 billion². A separate analysis of 2017 to 2019 Local Investment Plans and Annual Operation Plans³ had similar observations noting the decreasing trend in the number of LGUs that are including FP as a priority program.
- Claims paid by PhilHealth for RPRH-related services decreased by 8.6 percent from 2018 to 2019⁴.

1 newsinfo.inquirer.net/1111853/dohs-low-budget-use-continues-unused-funds-amount-to-billions?fbclid=IwAR3FYnPULhSGJPX3p8dhHyWTRUIJMXS-UG5SP-c8vRpfHxUtjODZr4bBciw

2 *Study of FP Spending Assessment for LGUs, Track 20 Project, Avenir Health*

3 *Analysis of 2017-2019 Local Investment Plans and Annual Operation Plans, unpublished, USAID/ReachHealth Project, Research Triangle, Inc.*

4 *The data should be interpreted with caution as 2019 figures may still be incomplete as some claims may still be in process at the time of data extraction.*

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