



PPS-PIDSP Statement on Ramping Up the National Immunization Program: A Call to Action



The pandemic has severely impacted on basic health services including immunization against vaccine preventable diseases.

To date , resurgence of epidemic prone diseases such as measles and polio remain to be a constant threat as a result of low coverage rates.

A recent DOH report has stated that coverage for the vaccines included in the national immunization program have never reached beyond 78 percent for BCG, 85 percent for the third dose of Pentavalent vaccine , 81 percent for OPV and 80 percent for the second dose of measles from 2011-2020, despite supplemental immunization activities. In order to achieve herd immunity, vaccination coverage must be at 95 percent for an epidemic prone disease such as measles.

Since targets must be immediately met, there is a pressing need for concerted efforts from government and non-government agencies, to include all stakeholders, to help avert another potential public health dilemma.

The PPS and PIDSP, as advocates of immunization continuously rallies to complement the efforts of the Department of Health, foremost, thru provision of continuing medical education on vaccination and its importance, providing needed expertise and logistical support for nationwide campaigns. In June of this year, our private -public partnership scored a major win in stopping the circulation of vaccine derived polio virus.

Given the current scenario we need to capitalize on our role as healthcare professionals as we greatly impact on parental decision making. Collectively and as individuals, to ensure optimal outcome, we need to provide consistent, accurate information about vaccine preventable risks, vaccine safety and benefits ⁽²⁾. In addition, we must be able to ensure easy access for other recommended vaccines that are not included in the national program.

We support the Department of Health in its vaccination efforts and recommend the following:

1. Strengthening catch-up immunization services.
2. Continuing Covid – 19 vaccination in the intended pediatric age group with consideration for co-administration of other vaccines such as MR.
3. Providing continuous information on vaccine safety and its adverse effects thru NAEFIC.
4. Adhering to the national immunization program and broadening public information campaign related to immunization days (like “every Wednesday as childhood immunization day”).

The success of our joint efforts will surely benefit the Filipino child .

References:

1. DOH , NIP Report by Dr Kim Tejano .
2. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21645515.2017.1394533>
3. American Academy of Pediatrics. Policy Statement on COVID-19 Vaccines in Children and Adolescents. PEDIATRICS vol 149 number 1, January 2022 e2021054532