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## DOH, NTF REVEAL NATIONAL COVID-19 VACCINE ROADMAP FROM EVALUATION & ACQUISITION TO DISTRIBUTION

### Press Release | 9 November 2020

The Department of Health (DOH) and the National Taskforce on COVID-19 (NTF) revealed updates about the immunization process for the COVID-19 vaccine in a press conference held today, November 9. Present in the virtual presser were Health Secretary Francisco T. Duque III, Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Singh-Vergeire, and Vaccine Czar and Inter-agency Taskforce (IATF) Chief Implementer Sec. Carlito G. Galvez.

According to Usec. Singh-Vergeire, it is important for the public to be informed of the progress of the country's proactive plan in acquiring and deploying vaccines as soon as a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine becomes available for the public.

*“Ang mga impormasyon na inyong naibahagi ay malaking hakbang upang ma-update natin ang publiko at mga kasamahan natin sa ibang sector kung ano ang ating mga plano patungo sa isang safe at efficient delivery of the COVID-19 vaccine,”* Usec. Singh-Vergeire said referring to the information shared by Sec. Duque and Sec. Galvez.

To detail how the country may acquire the vaccine when it becomes available, Sec. Duque presented how the government will ensure the safe and efficient delivery of the COVID-19 vaccines. These developments include a unified strategy map to achieve the New Normal, the process involved in vaccine delivery, and the organizational chart of officials who will champion the cost-effective and time-efficient acquisition and delivery of vaccines.

According to Sec. Duque, acquiring vaccines is a daunting task and will require a whole-of-government and whole-of-nation approach. “We call upon all stakeholders concerned. *Sa kabila ng lahat ng ating preparasyon sa IATF, sa NTF, sa local government units, at sa buong gobyerno, kinakailangan pa rin po namin ang tulong ng mga mamamayan, maski ang pribadong sektor, civil society organizations, and non-government organizations, to deliver this vaccine to every Filipino who needs it,*” Sec. Duque stressed.

Meanwhile, Sec. Galvez presented the Philippine National Vaccine Roadmap which has been recently approved by the IATF. In this presentation, the vaccine czar and IATF chief implementer elaborated on the seven key stages of the COVID-19 vaccine roadmap for the Philippines and the corresponding departments that will lead each phase.

Additionally, Sec. Galvez pronounced that setting this roadmap will hopefully accelerate the deployment of the vaccines when they are finally available. *“Ibig sabihin po nito, mas mapapabilis na natin ang prosesong pag-angkat ng bakuna, ngunit alam din po natin na hindi ito magiging madali kaya puspusan po ang ating ginagawang paghahanda kasama po ng ating DOH,”* Sec. Galvez said.

According to Sec. Galvez, the most critical stage is the beginning phase of the roadmap, which involves the scientific evaluation and selection of the vaccines. The DOH and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) are leading this phase.

The next stage is equally important as it will increase the chances of acquisition of the vaccines. The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Department of Finance (DOF) are in charge of this second stage, which is called the “Access of Acquisition” or “Guarantee of Access” stage.

The third stage, led by the Procurement Service of the Department of Budget and Management (PS-DBM) and DOF, and supervised by the Task Group Resource Management & Logistics (TGRML), entails the procurement process which ensures that vaccine acquisition and development is both cost-effective and time-efficient. This stage focuses on the organized and safe production, shipment, and storage of vaccines which will guarantee the safe handling of the vaccines.

Stage five, which consists of the distribution and deployment of vaccines, will also be handled by PS-DBM and TGRML, while stage six focuses on the nationwide implementation of the vaccination plan which will be a collaboration among the DOH, national and local government agencies, and the local government units (LGUs).

Lastly, DOH, DOST, and the University of the Philippines-National Institute of Health (UP-NIH) will manage and oversee the assessment, evaluation, and monitoring of the vaccine rollout to the public.

While the testing and trials of the vaccines are still being conducted to ensure their safe, effective, and ethical administration, both the DOH and NTF reminded the public to remain vigilant and be proactive in mitigating the spread of the virus through science-backed infection prevention and control measures.

*“Nais din naming ipaalala sa publiko that we will always prioritize your safety,”* Sec. Duque said. *“Kaya habang tayo po ay naghihintay para sa bakuna, ating hinihikayat ang lahat na isapuso at sundin ang ating mga minimum public health standards at maging BIDA sa ating kumunidad! Let us keep ourselves safe and healthy at patuloy na maging alerto at updated sa mga wastong COVID-19 information.”*