



Republic of the Philippines  
Department of Health  
**OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

## **DOH CONTINUES TO USE PCV13 CONTRARY TO REPORTS**

Press Release/14 February 2020

The Department of Health (DOH) National Immunization Program (NIP) continues to provide pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV), particularly PCV13, as part of its routine immunization contrary to circulating reports.

Under the DOH - NIP, PCV is given to the public for free. PCV protects children, pregnant women, and the elderly against diseases caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae* such as pneumonia, meningitis, and sepsis.

In 2012, DOH procured PCV10, a decavalent PCV which gives protection against 10 serotypes of *S. pneumoniae*. However, in 2014, DOH shifted to the tridecavalent PCV13, after two cost-effectiveness studies conducted by WHO showed that PCV 13 is more cost-effective than PCV 10. Thus, the previous Formulary Executive Council recommended the inclusion of PCV 13 in the Philippine National Formulary.

Last February 2019, the WHO released a position paper positing that when given to infants and children under 5 years, both PCV 10 and PCV 13 have substantial impacts against pneumonia, vaccine-type pneumococcal disease, and nasopharyngeal carriage.

Further, based on the WHO position paper, the choice of product to be used in a country should be based on various factors such as programmatic characteristics, vaccine supply, vaccine price, the local and regional prevalence of vaccine serotypes and antimicrobial resistance patterns.

“Under the UHC law, there is now a new Health Technology Assessment Council (HTAC) mandated to review existing health programs and benefits of the DOH and PhilHealth in the next two years. The DOH therefore requested the HTAC to review the NIP in particular the Pneumococcal Vaccination Program in light of scientific evidence and the significant budget impact of this particular vaccine to the Department.” Health Secretary Duque said.

DOH is holding off the procurement of any PCV while waiting for HTAC to complete its assessment. At present, DOH continues to use PCV13 as part of the routine immunization and assures the public that stocks of the said vaccine are ample.

“While we want our Filipino children to be protected against any pneumococcal disease, we also want to ensure them of the highest quality of our vaccines,” Health Secretary concluded.