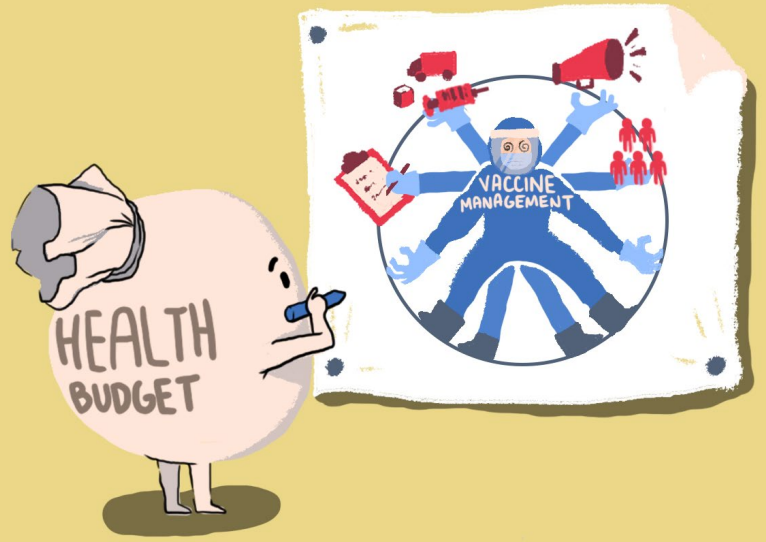


Pondohan nang Sapat ang Budget Pangkalusugan: investing in our children's health is an investment for the country's future



For the 2021 National Expenditure Program, the Department of Health has a budget allocation of P131.7 billion pesos.¹ This is 2.9% of the P 4.5 trillion total budget allocation for 2021. In light of efforts to restore and beef up our country's health capacity due to the COVID 19 pandemic and create resilient health systems, below are particular programs and items in the health sector that need sufficient funding.

Congress needs to ensure adequate investment in human resources in the healthcare system for the effective, efficient and sustainable delivery of Essential Primary Health Care services including the National Immunization Program.

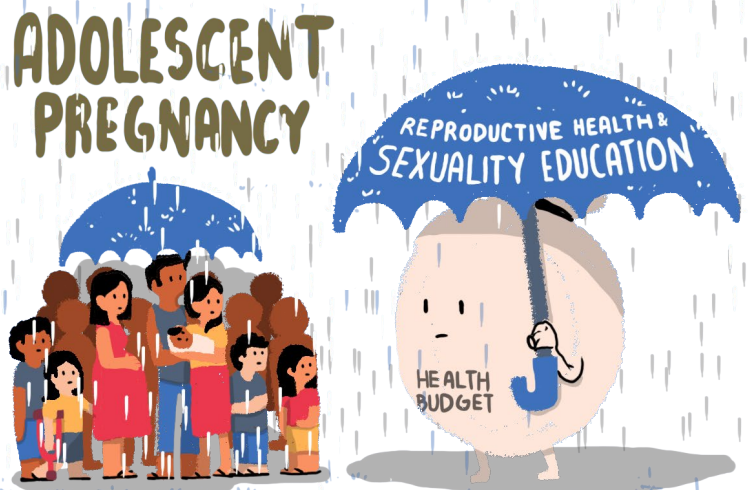
The increased budget for human resources is meant to ensure that there is enough capacity to address the demand for more personnel due to the increased number of patients needing medical care. The National Immunization Program needs additional funding for more manpower who will handle planning, forecasting, procurement, monitoring and evaluation, supervision, supply chain strengthening, communication, and surveillance. Likewise, funds for capacity building and technical support to implement the National Immunization Program are very much needed.

Congress should allocate funds to augment the country's cold chain capacity, especially that P2.5 billion has been allocated for the procurement of necessary COVID-19 vaccines for 2021.²

The increased procurement of vaccines will be for naught if there is no sufficient storage facility for the vaccines. Recommendations from Effective Vaccine Management and Cold Chain capacity assessments should be prioritized.

Congress should allocate adequate funding for adolescent health programs, particularly for teenage pregnancy and contraception.

There are no funds for supplies and commodities to address the alarming increase in the number of teenage pregnancies. This should be given particular importance in light of recent data released by the Commission on Population that at least 40 teens aged below 14 years old give birth every week.³



To address the escalating need for adolescent reproductive health, complementary funding to capacitate and train teachers to handle comprehensive sexuality education for young children, students, and youth, should be appropriated. According to UNICEF, we need P1 billion pesos to capacitate teachers to handle sexuality education programs intended for adolescents.

¹ National Expenditure Program 2021, <https://dbm.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/NEP2021/NEP-2021-VOLUME-2.pdf>

² <https://dbm.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/NEP2021/NEP-2021-VOLUME-1.pdf>

³ <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/18/more-minors-getting-pregnant-40-to-50-adolescents-give-birth-every-week-popcom/>