

# Recognizing the signs of heart failure

By Brontë H. Lacsamana

BREATHLESSNESS, easy fatigability, and swelling in the feet or ankles are symptoms of heart failure, or the inability of the heart to pump enough blood for the body's needs, which may be fatal if left untreated.

"It's a progressive disease. If you want to prevent death from heart failure, get medications for your diabetes, control your blood pressure, eat right, stop smoking," said Dr. Gilbert C. Vilela, president of the Philippine Heart Association (PHA), in the vernacular. "If you manage it today, it will be a lot better in the future."

Two of the major risk factors are diabetes and hypertension, which were among the leading causes of death in the country in the first 10 months of 2021, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

Ischemic heart disease itself was the top cause of death, accounting for 110,332 recorded deaths based on PSA's data. This reflected a 16.9% increase from 86,164 deaths in the same period in 2020.

"Many Filipinos don't know they have heart failure because they attribute the fatigue and shortness of breath to asthma or exposure to the cold, or the swelling of feet to having eaten lots of salty food," Dr. Vilela said in a video call with *BusinessWorld*.

Educating Filipinos on these symptoms and risk factors is proving to be difficult in a country where the health system is easily strained and citizens struggle to afford basic needs, he added.

In 2014, Dr. Bernadette A. Tumanan-Mendoza led a study on the burden of hospitalization for adult Filipinos with heart failure. The findings, which used data from the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth), showed that there were 16 cases of heart failure for every 1,000 hospital admissions.

The research estimated that the total economic burden of hospitalizations due to heart failure is roughly P851 million to P2 billion.

Epidemiological data show that 50% of those who have been hospitalized for heart failure will die in five years, added Dr. Vilela.

"People should know this because it's preventable," he said.

## ORGANIZING A NETWORK

The National Heart Failure Network, a multisectoral network of medical groups and associations led by the PHA, aims to combat this cardiovascular threat by strengthening heart failure awareness campaigns, research efforts, and healthcare delivery.

## FULL STORY

Read the full story by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or by typing the link [bit.ly/HeartFailure012622](http://bit.ly/HeartFailure012622)

## OPINION

# Democratizing access

On Jan. 20, the country started booster vaccinations for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in at least seven pharmacies and primary care clinics in Metro Manila.

People 18 years old and older registered for booster shots at Mercury Drug, Generika Drugstore, Southstar Drug, The Generics Pharmacy, Watsons, and Ayala Healthcare's clinics, namely, Healthway and Qualimed. The government announced that this initiative, called Resbakuna sa Botika, will be scaled up to include more pharmacies and clinics.

The Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP), composed of providers of life-saving medicines and vaccines across the supply chain, welcomes and supports measures that will widen access to COVID-19 therapies and vaccines.

This undertaking by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF), announced by vaccine czar Carlito G. Galvez, Jr. and Vivencio B. Dizon, deputy chief implementer of the country's pandemic plan, last week, will be crucial as the country confronts a surge of cases due to Omicron among other SARS-COV-2 variants. The World Health Organization has consistently said that vaccines prevent people from getting seriously ill or dying from COVID-19.

The rollout of COVID-19 vaccines in private retail pharmacies and primary care clinics was one of the recommendations we have advocated to enable faster roll-out. Under Department of Health Administrative Order 2020-0017, drugstores may conduct "other additional activities but may require appropriate regulation or be handled on a case-to-case basis," but should properly apply for variation of their License to Operate.

With the government centrally procuring vaccines, the inventory may be shared with retailers and clinics, multiplying the available number of vaccination sites in the country. Pharmacies and primary care clinics could augment vaccination efforts by local government units affected by the current COVID-19 surge. This move will help decongest current vaccination sites, and reduce the waiting time for the people. Since pharmacies and clinics are also strategically located in cities and provinces, individuals won't need to travel far.

Pharmacies and private clinics participating in this effort must conform to government standards as vaccines require strict temperature handling and storage, among others. There are specific requirements under Food and Drug Administration Advisory 2017-131, including: qualification of the person administering the vaccine; dedicated space for the activity; sanitation; compliance to good distribution and storage practices, in particular, cold chain requirements; patient counseling; and monitoring and reporting of adverse events following immunization.

Professionals administering the vaccine must also be trained in administering, monitoring of adverse events, counseling, and proper disposal. Like other healthcare professionals, pharmacists have been serving as frontliners, extending their commitment and services in hospitals, clinics, drugstores and pharmaceutical companies. Under the Pharmacy Law, administration of adult vaccines by duly trained pharmacists in licensed drugstores is permitted. In fact, pharmacists have been training on immunization even prior to the pandemic. Pharmacies have been sites for adult flu and pneumococcal vaccination.

Overall, Resbakuna sa Botika will help the country achieve its target of vaccinating 90 million Filipinos, as well as in providing boosters to the eligible adult population.

This new framework may be expanded to other COVID-19 therapies with Emergency Use Approval (EUA). In an interview with *The Chiefs* on One News, PHAP Chairman Dr. Beaver Tamesis said that making COVID-19 therapies available in pharmacies and clinics would be "democratizing" access to these life-saving interventions. Easy access to these COVID therapies will help save more lives, improve home care management, as well as reduce the risk of hospitalization and burden on the healthcare system.

TEODORO B. PADILLA is the executive director of Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP), which represents the biopharmaceutical medicines and vaccines industry in the country. Its members are at the forefront of research and development efforts for COVID-19 and other diseases that affect Filipinos.



## Republic of the Philippines ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF THE LETTERS OF AGREEMENT ENTERED INTO BY PSALM WITH PAMPANGA II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (PELCO II), WITH PRAYER FOR ISSUANCE OF PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY (PA)

ERC CASE NO. 2021-110 RC

POWER SECTOR ASSETS AND LIABILITIES MANAGEMENT CORPORATION (PSALM),  
Applicant.

Promulgated:  
January 14, 2022

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## NOTICE OF VIRTUAL HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given that on 31 December 2021, Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation (PSALM) filed an *Application* dated 04 October 2021, seeking the Commission's approval of the Letters of Agreement (LOA) it entered into with Pampanga II Electric Cooperative, Inc. (PELCO II), with prayer for issuance of provisional authority (PA).

The pertinent allegations of the said *Application* are hereunder quoted, as follows:

- This is an Application for the Approval of the terms and conditions of the Contract for the Supply of Electric Energy (the PSALM-PELCO II CSEE) entered into by and between Applicant PSALM and Pampanga II Electric Cooperative, Inc. (PELCO II) pursuant to Section 67 of Republic Act No. 9136, otherwise known as the "Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA) of 2001".
- Applicant PSALM is a government-owned and controlled corporation created by virtue of the EPIRA, with principal office address at 24<sup>th</sup> Floor Vertis North Corporate Center 1, Astra corner Lux Drives, North Avenue, Quezon City.
- Pursuant to Section 49 of the EPIRA and the consequent assignment on 11 May 2009 (a copy of the Letter of Agreement is hereto attached as Annex "A") of all NPC power supply contracts to PSALM, NPC assigned and transferred to PSALM all its rights and obligations in, to and under its CSEEs and other similarly or substantially equivalent power supply contracts with NPC power customers (collectively referred to as "Power Supply Contracts").
- On and from 11 May 2009, the power supply contracts were deemed amended as follows: (i) all references to NPC therein shall be treated as references to PSALM; (ii) PSALM shall be deemed the SUPPLIER under said Power Supply Contracts; and (iii) the rights and obligations of the Parties shall be governed by and construed in accordance with said Power Supply Contracts, as amended by the 11 May 2009 Letter Agreement. Thus, this instant application by PSALM.
- The PSALM-PELCO II CSEE was executed based on the ERC-approved template under ERC Resolution No. 08, Series of 2005 issued on 07 July 2005. On 09 August 2005, said template was later on amended by this Honorable Commission in its Resolution No. 15, Series of 2005.
- In ERC Resolution No. 33, Series of 2006, "Resolution Clarifying the Purpose of the Adoption of the TSC Template," the ERC clarified that the TSC Template should merely serve as a guide for the Distribution Utilities ("DUs") and NPC and should not be construed as the contract contemplated under Section 67 of the EPIRA.

## PSALM'S PENDING CSEE APPLICATIONS

ERC Case No. 2020-015 RC

- On 20 July 2020, PSALM filed an application docketed as ERC Case No. 2020-015 RC for the approval of the negotiated CSEE with CASURECO IV.
- Said CSEE, which has a duration from 26 November 2019 to 25 June 2021 and was executed based on the ERC-approved template under ERC Resolution No. 08, Series of 2005. The same is now for resolution of this Honorable Commission.

ERC Case No. 2021-080 RC

- On 20 February 2020, the PSALM Board through Board Resolution No. 2020-0226-02 (a copy of which is attached hereto as Annex "B") approved the execution of the PSALM-PELCO II CSEE with PELCO II for the period effective 26 May 2020 to 25 December 2020 (a copy of which is attached hereto as Annex "C"). Based on the approval, PSALM entered into the PSALM-PELCO II CSEE with PELCO II from 26 May 2020 to 25 December 2020.
- The foregoing CSEE was executed based on the template approved by this Honorable Commission under Resolution No. 8, Series of 2005 as amended by Resolution No. 15, Series of 2005.
- Subsequently, upon PELCO II's request, a Letter of Agreement (LOA) dated 21 December 2020 (a copy of which is attached hereto as Annex "D") was executed between PELCO II and PSALM.
- The only revision introduced in the LOA is the extension of the period of the PSALM-PELCO II CSEE from 26 December 2020 until 25 April 2021. It is further understood that the LOA shall be an integral part of the PSALM-PELCO II CSEE, and the terms and conditions not otherwise affected by the above-mentioned amendment shall remain valid and effective.

## LETTERS OF AGREEMENT SUBJECT OF THE PRESENT APPLICATION

- LOA for the period 26 April 2021 to 25 July 2021
- PELCO II, through its letter dated 10 March 2021, requested for a three-month (3) extension of its CSEE from 26 April 2021 to 25 July 2021.
- PSALM acted on such request and determined that it has available capacity to supply PELCO II from Unified Leyte Geothermal Power Plant.
- Based on the foregoing, PSALM through LOA dated 16 March 2021 granted PELCO II's request for an extension of three-month period from 26 April 2021 to 25 July 2021 (a copy of which is attached hereto as Annex "E").
- It is further understood that this LOA shall be made an integral part of the existing CSEE between PSALM and PELCO II. Moreover, this LOA merely amended the period in Section 3.1 of the CSEE and other terms and conditions of the CSEE shall remain valid and effective.
- LOA for the period 26 July 2021 until 25 October 2021
- PELCO II, through its letter dated 17 June 2021 letter, requested PSALM for an extension of its CSEE from 26 July 2021 until 25 October 2021 and submitted its 40MW Equivalent Demand.
- Subsequent thereto, PELCO II in its letter dated 1 July 2021 requested to increase its Contract Energy from 40MW to 55 MW, also for the period 26 July 2021 until 25 October 2021.
- PSALM acted on such request and determined that it has available capacity to supply PELCO II from Unified Leyte Geothermal Power Plant.
- Based on the foregoing, PSALM through LOA dated 16 July 2021 (a copy of which is attached hereto as Annex "F") granted PELCO II's request for an extension of three months from 26 July 2021 until 25 October 2021 and the corresponding increase from 40MW to 55 MW, also for the same period.
- It is further understood that this LOA shall be made an integral part of the existing CSEE between PSALM and PELCO II. Moreover, this LOA merely amended the period in Section 3.1

of the CSEE and other terms and conditions of the CSEE shall remain valid and effective.

- Furthermore, the execution of these LOAs is without prejudice to PSALM's petition for Review of the case pending with the Supreme Court entitled "PSALM vs. ERC and Philippine Electricity Market Corporation" docketed as G.R. No. 193521.
- Further, in compliance with Section 2, Rule 6 (Pre-Filing Requirements) of this Honorable Commission's Resolution No. 01, Series of 2021, and in support of the instant Application for the CSEE's approval, a copy of the instant Application (including Annexes) was furnished to the offices of the City Mayor and the Sangguniang Panlungsod of Quezon City (Annexes "G" and series). The Application (excluding Annexes) was also published in a newspaper of general circulation (Annex "H" and series").

## ALLEGATIONS IN SUPPORT FOR THE ISSUANCE OF PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY

- PSALM acknowledges that the continued operation of the Distribution Utilities is indispensable to the economic efficiency of the franchise area they service, not to mention the ripple effect of that efficiency to the economic growth of the entire country. In order for these Distribution Utilities to continue lawfully drawing electricity from the grid, it is imperative that they enter into agreement/s with PSALM as Supplier for the supply of electricity, through a contract of sale for electricity, hence the respective CSEE.
- A grant of provisional authority to execute the LOAs for the period 26 April 2021 until 25 October 2021 will benefit PELCO II and will ultimately redound to the benefit of end consumers.
- Attached as Annex "I" is the Judicial Affidavit of Eng. James Marvin Mamarado, Corporate Staff Officer B of the Electricity Trading Department (ETD) under the Office of the Vice President - Privatization and Asset Management Group attesting to the truth of the above matters.
- Pursuant to ERC rules of practice and procedure, this Honorable Commission may exercise its discretion by granting provisional authority or interim relief prior to a final decision.
- It is understood that the interim relief sought by Applicant PSALM that may be granted by this Honorable Commission, shall be subject to adjustments and other conditions that this Honorable Commission may impose after its hearing and final determination.

## PRAYER

WHEREFORE, Applicant PSALM most respectfully prays that this Honorable Commission APPROVE the duly negotiated Letters of Agreement with PELCO II covering the period from 26 April 2021 until 25 October 2021. It is likewise prayed that a Provisional Authority be issued authorizing PSALM to implement the subject LOA with PELCO II.

Other reliefs just and equitable under the premises are likewise prayed for.

The Commission has set the *Application* for determination of compliance with the jurisdictional requirements, expository presentation, Pre-trial Conference, and presentation of evidence on the following dates and online platform for the conduct thereof, pursuant to Resolution No. 09, Series of 2020 dated 24 September 2020 and Resolution No. 01, Series of 2021 dated 17 December 2020 (ERC Revised Rules of Practice and Procedure):<sup>2</sup>

Date	Platform	Activity
17 February 2022 (Thursday) at two o'clock in the afternoon (2:00 P.M.)	Microsoft Teams	Determination of compliance with the jurisdictional requirements and expository presentation
24 February 2022 (Thursday) at two o'clock in the afternoon (2:00 P.M.)	Microsoft Teams	Pre-trial Conference and presentation of evidence

Any interested stakeholder may submit its comments and/or clarifications at least one (1) calendar day prior to the scheduled virtual hearing, via electronic mail (e-mail) at [docket@erc.ph](mailto:docket@erc.ph), copy furnish the Legal Service through [legal@erc.ph](mailto:legal@erc.ph). The Commission shall give priority to the stakeholders who have duly submitted their respective comments and/or clarifications, to discuss the same and propound questions during the course of the expository presentation.

Moreover, any persons who have an interest in the subject matter of the instant case may become a party by filing with the Commission via e-mail at [docket@erc.ph](mailto:docket@erc.ph), copy furnish the Legal Service through [legal@erc.ph](mailto:legal@erc.ph), a verified Petition to Intervene at least five (5) calendar days prior to the date of the initial virtual hearing and subject to the requirements under Rule 9 of the ERC Revised Rules of Practice and Procedure, indicating therein the docket number and title of the case and stating the following:

- The petitioner's name, mailing address, and e-mail address;
- The nature of petitioner's interest in the subject matter of the proceeding and the way and manner in which such interest is affected by the issues involved in the proceeding; and
- A statement of the relief desired.

Likewise, all other persons who may want their views known to the Commission with respect to the subject matter of the case may file through e-mail at [docket@erc.ph](mailto:docket@erc.ph), copy furnish the Legal Service through [legal@erc.ph](mailto:legal@erc.ph), their Opposition or Comment thereon at least five (5) calendar days prior to the initial virtual hearing and subject to the requirements under Rule 9 of the ERC Revised Rules of Practice and Procedure. No particular form of Opposition or Comment is required, but the document, letter, or writing should contain the following:

- The name, mailing address, and e-mail address of such person;
- A concise statement of the Opposition or Comment; and
- The grounds relied upon.

Any of the persons mentioned in the preceding paragraphs may access the copy of the *Application* on the Commission's official website at [www.erc.gov.ph](http://www.erc.gov.ph).

Finally, all interested persons may be allowed to join the scheduled initial virtual hearings by providing the Commission, thru [legal.virtualhearings@erc.ph](mailto:legal.virtualhearings@erc.ph), with their respective e-mail addresses and indicating therein the case number of the instant *Application*. The Commission will send the access link/s to the aforementioned hearing platform within five (5) working days prior to the scheduled hearings.

WITNESS, the Honorable Commissioners ALEXIS M. LUMBATAN, CATHERINE P. MACEDA, FLORESINDA G. BALDO-DIGAL and MARKO ROMEO L. FUENTES, Energy Regulatory Commission, this 4<sup>th</sup> day of January 2022 in Pasig City.

AGNES VST DEVANADERA  
Chairperson and CEO  
ERC  
Office of the Chairperson  
\*AVSTD-2022-01-510-0029\*

LS: KJP/lsp/MCCG

<sup>1</sup> A Resolution Adopting the Guidelines Governing Electronic Applications, Filings and Virtual Hearings Before the Energy Regulatory Commission.  
<sup>2</sup> A Resolution Adopting the Revised Rules of Practice and Procedure of the Energy Regulatory Commission.