

OPINION

# Focus on sustainable healthcare

The Philippines logged an average of 662 coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases per day from June 20 to 26, the Department of Health said on Monday, fueling calls for renewed vigilance against the virus. This tally is 53% higher than the number of infections reported from June 13 to June 19.

The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the need for a strengthened healthcare system, where all health pillars from governance, human resources, financing, medicines, information, and service delivery are efficiently working to provide quality patient care in the time of need.

With this, the PHAPCares Foundation will push sustainable healthcare initiatives in cities as well as in Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDAs). PHAPCares, the social responsibility arm of the Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP), will focus on three key program areas: sustainable healthcare, access to medicines and emergency response, and social development.

Under the sustainable healthcare program, the group will put in place healthcare services in communities in both urban and rural settings. The goal is to empower more communities to improve health outcomes and increase the productivity of people living there.

Assuming the PHAPCares leadership is Lotis Ramin, who succeeds Boehringer Ingelheim general manager Yee Kok Cheong as Foundation President.

Following the global battle against COVID-19, Ms. Ramin recognized the urgency to reinforce well-functioning and sustainable healthcare systems. Apart from the pandemic, communities are challenged by other health threats such as non-communicable and other infectious diseases.

As part of the whole-of-society approach, the Foundation will collaborate more with the national and local governments, and with other partners to establish model cities and communities that reflect the Universal Health Care (UHC) aspiration.

UHC in the country, as defined, is a healthcare model which provides all Filipinos access to a set of quality and cost-effective health services without causing financial hardship. It also prioritizes communities or groups that do not have access to such quality services.

The deliberate focus on sustainable healthcare will also be spearheaded by PHAPCares officers

namely Novartis Healthcare country president and managing director Jugo Tsumura (vice-president) and Abbott Philippines general manager Melissa Ellen Belvis (treasurer).

Joining Yee Kok Cheong as trustees are Bayer Philippines managing director and country division head Angel Michael Evangelista, Zuellig Pharma Philippines market managing director Jannette Jakosalem, Takeda Healthcare country manager Loreann Villanueva, PHAPCares executive director Dr. Maria Rosarita Quijano-Siasoco, and Dr. Corazon Maglaya (honorary trustee).

At the height of the pandemic, PHAPCares launched a campaign to strengthen the country's healthcare system capacity, and protect healthcare workers.

PHAP members provided personal protective equipment (PPE), test kits, ventilators, medicines, and food packs to health frontliners and communities affected by the pandemic. They also made an initial donation of P120 million, benefiting at least 155 health facilities nationwide.

One of the ways to achieve sustainable healthcare in communities is through disaster preparedness.

PHAPCares will continue to strengthen access to medicines and emergency response by donating medicines to communities and institutions in times of disasters.

Under emergency response, it will again conduct training under the Earthquake, Landslide, Search and Rescue Orientation Course (ELSAROC) through a partnership with the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA).

As of today, 564 individuals from 26 pharmaceutical companies, local government units, non-government organizations, and academic institutions have trained under ELSAROC. These individuals have been trained to serve as rescuers, specifically in extricating and caring for victims that may be trapped under collapsed structures.

Established in 2003, the PHAPCares Foundation has received a number of recognitions, including a Presidential Citation for its training and employment program for community nurses. The nurses were deployed in GIDA communities, providing needed healthcare support in far-flung areas.

The organization has donated at least P1 billion worth of medicines to communities disadvantaged by sickness, poverty, conflicts, and calamities.

## MEDICINE CABINET TEODORO B. PADILLA

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.



# MSF: COVAX failed, regional pandemic response is key

By Patricia B. Mirasol  
Reporter

THE failure of the COVAX facility to deliver equitable vaccine access showed the importance of building capacity at the regional level for funding, research, and delivery of resources, said a Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières or MSF) official.

"What is important is providing capacity in the regions and making sure institutions and countries have access to these tools," said Nathalie Ernoult, deputy head of policy and advocacy of MSF's Access Campaign, in a June 20 video call. "There is a way to have different models of response. Let's work with that diversity of capabilities — rather than trying to have a one-size-fits-all model."

The COVAX Facility (COVAX), envisioned as a global vaccine procurement facility that would share access to COVID-19 vaccines to every country regardless of income, failed to deliver on its promise, MSF said in December 2021.

"The rapid rate at which scientists produced multiple highly effective COVID-19 vaccines was an epic public health achievement. Yet as the data reflect, efforts over the past year to equitably distribute those vaccines have been a failure," MSF said in its report.

Differing national interests make it difficult to formulate a centralized response despite facing a common threat, Ms. Ernoult added. "It [COVAX] didn't work. It's not going to work tomorrow. Let's take it for granted it's not coming together," she said. "If you have a lot of political and financial power, you are always better placed to decide what equity means for you ... I think, in a way, it [COVAX] was kind of a failure in multilateralism."



COURTESY OF US EMBASSY IN THE PHILIPPINES

## LOCAL DIAGNOSTICS

Self-reliance in meeting health needs includes increasing the production of diagnostic products at both the local and regional levels.

These include Ateneo de Manila University's Integrated Protein Research Development Center under the Department of Science and Technology, which will develop the technology required for the production of proteins used in the biomedical and food industries.

"We're developing local diagnostics so we can bring them to the places that do need them," said Ricardo Jose S. Guerrero, research fellow at Ateneo Research Institute for Science and Engineering, in a November 2021 event by MSF.

Another is the Virology Institute of the Philippines. Scheduled to open between 2023 and 2024, it will conduct research and development on diagnostics, vaccines, and therapeutics.

Highlighting the need for regional production, Ms. Ernoult shared that MSF identified hundreds of suppliers that could have received the technology to produce mRNA vaccines.

"Some are in Bangladesh, China, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia — but there was no willingness to share the know-how to manufacture [these mRNA vaccines]," she said.

"How do you share know-how during a pandemic? How do you remove

intellectual copyright?" she asked. "In [a] pandemic, you need timely response. You need manufacturers in different places."

## GLOBAL ACCORD

The World Health Assembly in December 2021, kickstarted a process to develop a global accord on pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response.

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director general of the World Health Organization, said the decision represented a once-in-a-generation opportunity to strengthen the global health architecture for the well-being of all.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a light on the many flaws in the global system to protect people from pandemics: the most vulnerable people going without vaccines; health workers without needed equipment to perform their life-saving work; and 'me-first' approaches that stymie the global solidarity needed to deal with a global threat," said Dr. Tedros in a press statement.

"But at the same time, we have seen inspiring demonstrations of scientific and political collaboration, from the rapid development of vaccines, to today's commitment by countries to negotiate a global accord that will help to keep future generations safer from the impacts of pandemics," he said.

## Electronics, from S1/1

Mr. Lachica said semiconductors would drive the sector's export growth this year.

"The driving factors would be mostly from semiconductors, the components and also demand for medical electronics, telecommunications, industrial products, which are really spurred by the use of data computing, big data, artificial intelligence, Internet of Things and Industrial Revolution 4.0," he added.

He said they were lining up meetings with incoming President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. and his Cabinet to explain the situation and the threats that the industry faces.

Philippine electronics exports rose by 12.9% to a record \$45.92 billion last year, SEIPI said in February.

For December alone, the country's electronics exports went up slightly to \$3.92 billion from \$3.9 billion a year earlier.

Telecommunication exports rose almost three times, automotive electronics increased by 39%, office equipment went up by 29.7% and semiconductors inched up by 1.61%.

Hong Kong, the United States, China, Singapore and Japan were the top destinations for Philippine electronics exports in December. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

## Building materials, from S1/1

Meanwhile, prices of galvanized iron sheets rose by 13.8% from 13.5% in April, while prices of PVC pipes increased by 10.3% from 3.8%. Prices of hardware (5.2% from 4.6%), painting works (5% from 4.7%), plywood (4.7% from 4.4%), lumber (4.2% from 3.8%), sand and gravel (3.8% from 2.7%), doors and jamba (2% from 1.9%) and glass (1.6% from 1.4%) also rose.

Bulk prices of tileworks inched up by 0.1%, a turnaround from a 0.4% decline in April.

On the other hand, the price increase in electrical works slowed to 8.6% in May from 9.5% in April, as did plumbing fixtures and accessories/waterworks (7.1% from 8%) and concrete products and cement (4.6% from 4.8%).

A sustained pickup in prices would probably continue for the rest of the year, Mr. Mapa said. "Prices of construction materials may remain on the uptrend as both supply and demand side pressures extend into 2023," he said.

"However, we see the possibility of a less pronounced demand side pressure as construction outlays slow down from the pace in the first half. Demand side pressures will stay the same or may even accelerate," he added. — **Abigail Marie P. Yraola**

## JOB OPENING

- 4 Vietnamese Language Customer Service Representative
- 2 Chinese Language Customer Service Representative
- 2 Bahasa Language Customer Service Representative
- 2 Thai Language Customer Service Representative

- Bachelor's/College Degree or with equivalent training and work experience
- Proficient in writing, reading and speaking in both English and Vietnamese/Chinese/Bahasa/Thai

## TR17 SOLUTIONS, INC.

Unit 9-A 9th Floor, Marvin Plaza Bldg.,  
2153 Don Chino Roces Ave., Pio Del Pilar, Makati City  
Tel No.: (632) 8585-6488; Email: Tri7HR@tri-7.com

## JOB OPENING

### FINISHES ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

- BS on construction Management, engineering or equivalent
- US and/or International construction experience is a must
- 5-8 years of supervisory experience
- 5-10 years of applicable construction and design experience with demonstrated leadership
- Experience in managing large team members (500+ people)
- Able to schedule CPM, 120-schedule and 5-schedule

Scope of Positions: As assigned by Project Superintendent, is responsible for supervision of selected phases of a project and for obtaining successful cost results in labor and general materials purchases for assigned projects.

## HASKELL COMPANY PHILIPPINES, INC.

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## Borrow, from S1/1

"I think the general sentiment is curious especially with the choice to issue an off-the-run series to start the month, as well as to issue a 14-year tenor in the week we expect the US Federal Reserve to hike by 75 basis points," a bond trader said in a Viber message.

At its latest meeting in June, the Fed increased the benchmark interest rate by 75 bps, the biggest since 1994, to battle inflationary pressures.

The government borrows from local and external sources to help fund a budget deficit capped at more than 7% of the gross domestic product for 2022.

The National Government has a gross domestic borrowing program of P1.91 trillion this year. Of this amount, T-bills are expected to bring in P52 billion, while the fixed-rate T-bonds are estimated to raise P1.86 trillion. — **Ana Olivia A. Tirona**

## Investment, from S1/1

The order allows 25% foreign equity in private recruitment, whether for local or overseas employment, and contracts for the construction of defense-related structures.

A 30% foreign equity in advertising was kept. It also allows 40% foreign equity in infrastructure projects; exploration, development and use of natural resources; ownership of private lands; operation of public utilities; educational institutions other than those established by religious groups and mission boards.

The culture, production, milling, processing, trading except

retailing of rice and corn will also be limited to 30% foreign equity.

The order also kept a 40% foreign equity in contracts for the supply of materials, goods and commodities to government corporations and agencies; operation of deep-sea commercial fishing vessels; ownership of condominium units; and private radio communication networks.

The amended Foreign Investment Act of 1991 calls for updates to the foreign investment negative list, which shows which activities are open to foreign investors and are reserved to Filipinos. — **Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza**

# Subway celebrates 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary with e-learning program

Internet connectivity has been an issue that has plagued the educational system over the past two years. A pressing problem in the far-flung areas in the country and even in some parts of Metro Manila is the issue of intermittent or no internet connectivity at all.

Every student deserves the opportunity to access learning resources despite accessibility issues. It is equally important that the country's education system is also improved so that students will be prepared to face the highly competitive workforce.

One company that is passionate about education is Subway. Subway is the world's largest submarine sandwich chain with more than 34,000 locations around the world. Subway understands that it takes more than just good food to nourish people and build vibrant communities. It starts with taking care of people, the heart and soul of the Subway experience.

One way of taking care of people is to provide opportunities for the future generation to get the best education that is available. To celebrate its 26th anniversary, Subway will be partnering with Critical Links and e-Dris, to launch the School-in-the-Box initiative.

## PARTNERS

Critical Links is a pioneer in delivering innovative e-Learning infrastructure for the next generation of schools, especially in challenging environments. E-Dris, on the other hand, is a company that offers online and offline education through Micro-Cloud Architecture, Hybrid Learning or through Instant Access or Content.

"The past two years has shown us how important internet connectivity is for our children. Those with better internet connectivity do much better in school because of better access to online educational resources," said Mr. Joshua Wahiman, Marketing Manager of Subway.

"Our partnership with Critical Links and e-Dris will be able to benefit more children so that they will have a better opportunity to achieve excellence in education," he added.

Under the School-in-a-Box initiative, schools that do not have access to the internet will be given an opportunity to optimize technology and allow students to benefit from a 21st century education. The program will be piloted in a school in Metro Manila that has infrastructure limitations such as power outages and fluctuations and is often cut off from the Internet and cloud based resources due to the lack of regular or robust connectivity.

"This will be our way of supporting the Department of Education in the attainment



From left to right — Mr. Joshua Wahiman (Subway's Marketing Manager), Ms Jean Gagarino (Subway's Territory Manager), Atty. Rainier Butalid (CEO of e-DRIS Inc.), Syed Darwish Bederi III (Asia Pacific Regional Head of Critical Links based in Princeton, NJ US.)

of their goal of bridging the digital divide," Mr. Joshua Wahiman said.

## CLOUD BASED ENVIRONMENT

The program will utilize the C3 Micro-Cloud, a self-contained, cloud-enabled environment that allows the provisioning of content, resources, and management to local students and teachers even if they do not have access to the Internet. The server can support up to 50 devices at a time and is ideal for a library, laboratory or a facility room.

"Content in the form of texts and other resources can be centrally curated in the C3 Cloud Control portal by those responsible for curriculum and distributed to any authorized C3 Micro-Cloud regardless of where it is, whenever a network link becomes available," Atty. Rainier Butalid (CEO of e-DRIS Inc.) and Syed Darwish Bederi III, of Critical links explained.

With the C3 Micro-Cloud any school can use podcasts, e-books, quizzes, and learning games, allowing students to seek and gather information on their own under the guidance of their teachers instead of passively receiving only the hardcopy of information available in books.

"This School-in-the-Box initiative is going to be a game changer in the provinces because even if there is limited or sporadic bandwidth, lack of connectivity, rigid security and usage restrictions, schools can use the C3 Micro-Cloud to bring 21st century learning and discovery to their students," Mr. Joshua Wahiman of Subway said.

"Together with our partners, we will be opening a world of learning and opportunity to students in schools anywhere," he added.