

## The Philippine Health Care System

The Philippines – a middle-income country – is one of the most populous countries in the ASEAN region with more than a hundred million population in 2016. Significant population growth of the Philippines is not merely due to the increase in livebirths alone; it is also accounted for by the broad and inclusive improvement of the health status in the country in the last forty years.

The country's health profile depicts a distinct epidemiologic and demographic transition characterized by double burden of diseases consisting of communicable diseases and non-communicable diseases requiring effective public health intervention. The health status of the Philippines is best described as crossroads of infectious and non-communicable diseases.

Just like other Asean countries such as Indonesia and Thailand, the Philippine health system has a decentralized structure wherein the national government, particularly the Department of Health (DOH), is mandated to provide overall policy direction and program planning while the local government units have autonomy and responsibility for direct healthcare service provision in their jurisdiction with the guidance from the provincial health offices. Moreover, the Philippines health care system has a strong involvement of the private sector comprising about half of the system, with regulatory functions still solely being enforced by the government.

The Philippine Health Agenda for 2016-2022 highlights the critical interventions required of the health system to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The health agenda articulates three goals: (1) Financial Protection; (2) Better Health Outcomes; and (3) Responsiveness. In the last 30 years, critical structural reforms were undertaken:

1. Aligning DOH resources to promote Local Health System Development
2. Fiscal Autonomy for Government Hospital
3. Good Governance Programs
4. Enrollment of Filipinos in Philippine Health Insurance Corporation
5. Use of Generic Drugs
6. The Milk Code
7. Increased funding for Universal Health Care through the Sin taxes. Sin taxes are levied on cigarettes and alcohol.



Milestones of Department of Health (DOH) during the last 30 years