

Situation Report 6 Measles Outbreak

	Cases	Deaths
2018	21,812	202
2019*	21,396	315
* as of 14 March 2019		

19 March 2019

Overview

Current measles outbreak started late 2017 in Mindanao. In 2018, 21,812 cases were reported with 202 deaths. Outbreak and supplementary immunization activities in 2018 were ineffective in addressing the outbreak as the immunization activity was met with increased vaccine hesitancy due to the Dengue vaccine controversy. Weak routine immunization leading to a decrease in overall immunization coverage over the last decade resulted in low resistance or presence of herd immunity among younger children.

The Philippines Department of Health (DoH) declared measles outbreaks in 5 Regions (Region NCR, III, IV-A, VI, VII) on 7 February 2019, whereas cases are being reported from all 17 Regions. DoH issued guidelines for nation-wide measles vaccination accompanied by Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) and Vitamin A distribution until end March 2019, prioritizing unvaccinated children between 6 and 59 months; schoolchildren from kindergarten to grade 6; and adults who voluntarily wish to be vaccinated against measles.

Current Situation

Between 1 January and 14 March 2019, 21,396 measles cases including 315 deaths were officially reported through the routine surveillance system from the DoH: a 384% increase with the same time period in 2018 (see Table 1).

With a median age of 3 years old, 54% of measles cases are under 5 years of age. The majority of measles cases are male (53%).

As of 14 March 2019, 60% of cases have no documented vaccination status. DoH estimates that 2% of cases had been previously vaccinated with one or 2 doses. The vaccination status of the remainder of cases is unknown.

Table 1: Measles Cases by Region, Philippines
14 March 2018 vs 14 March 2019

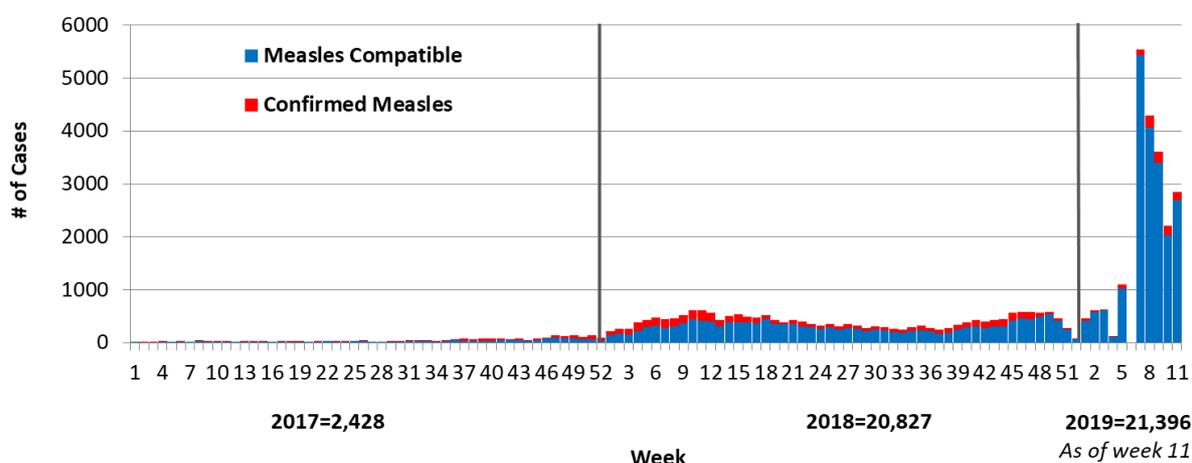
Region	2018			2019		
	Cases	Deaths	CFR	Cases	Deaths	CFR
I	67	0	0	903	11	1
II	9	0	0	306	2	1
III	95	3	3	3,409	52	2
IV-A	93	1	1	4,401	87	2
IV-B	13	0	0	874	8	1
V	7	0	0	626	6	1
VI	54	0	0	1,197	4	0
VII	63	0	0	952	10	1
VIII	7	0	0	968	24	2
IX	693	3	0	265	0	0
X	368	1	0	1,059	10	1
XI	746	12	2	443	6	1
XII	385	5	1	443	4	1
XIII	51	1	2	490	1	0
ARMM	1,498	12	1	433	4	1
CAR	13	0	0	361	1	0
NCR	255	5	2	4,266	85	2
Total	4,417	43	1	21,396	315	1

Figure 1: Measles Incidence Rate and Case Fatality Rate (CFR) Philippines
7 February-14 March 2019



Figure 2 shows the number of newly reported cases per epidemiological week, where a delay of reporting for up to 2 weeks needs to be taken into consideration.

Figure 2: Measles Compatible and Confirmed Cases Philippines
1 January 2017-14 March 2019



Response so far

Risk assessment

WHO is assessing the overall risk of the current outbreak as high at the national level due to the large number of cases reported, chronic low routine immunisation coverage, and persistent vaccination hesitancy. Regional risk has been upgraded from low to moderate as an increasing number of neighbouring countries are reporting measles cases with a travel history to the Philippines (Australia, China, Hong Kong, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, and Taiwan).

Overall risk		
National	Regional	Global
High	Moderate	Low

Case management

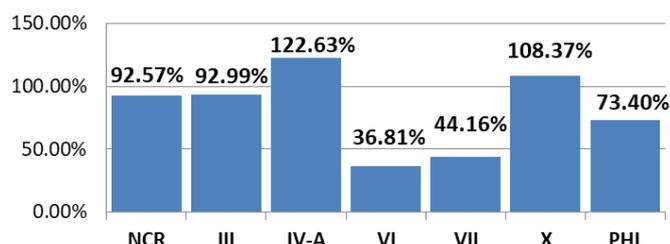
The CFR of 1.47% is considered high. Reports from health facilities visited during monitoring show many children die of measles-complications such as pneumonia, often due to late referral. Other underlying causes for the high mortality are related to diagnosis and malnutrition.

Philippine Red Cross (PRC) treated a total of 2,685 measles patients at its Measles Care Units in 5 major hospitals in Metro Manila.

Immunization

Up to 15 March 2019, 2,777,561 out of the total target of 3,783,985 children aged 6-59 months have been vaccinated against measles (73.40%). As some regions (such as NCR, Regions IV-A and X) are implementing mixed vaccination strategy (selective and non-selective), where children are immunized regardless of vaccination status, many more children than the target group are vaccinated, exceeding the targeted number. Hence, the target shown in the graph is not reflective of the true target.

% of Targeted Children (6-59 Months) Vaccinated with MCV in priority regions as of 15 March 2019



PRC volunteers vaccinated a total of 15,527 children in NCR, Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

Monitoring visits show stock out measles and polio vaccines in some areas, causing frustration among health workers and parents who travel large distances to vaccinate their children at the health facility. Feedback to DoH has led to rapid delivery of vaccines to areas with reported stock out.

The first batch of 1 million measles-rubella (MR) vaccines procured through UNICEF arrived on 6 March 2019, whereas the remainder of 5 million doses of MR vaccine is estimated to arrive in the country by 19-20 March. This is intended to be delivered to country as staggered distribution so as the batches of vaccines that are ready will be sent to the country.

UNICEF and WHO monitoring visits have so far covered NCR (Manila, Mandaluyong, Taguig, Pasay, Caloocan, Quezon City, Marikina), BARMM (Cotabato, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao), CAR (Baguio City, la Trinidad, Itogon), Region III (Bulacan), IV-A (Rizal, Antipolo), IV-B (Mindoro Oriental), V (Albay, Sorsogon, Camarines Sur), VI (Negros), VII (Cebu, Bohol), VIII (Leyte, Northern and Western Samar), IX (Zamboanga City), Region 10 (Cagayan De Oro City, Iligan City).

DOH central level has agreed with regional DOH and LGU that the final 2 weeks of the vaccination campaign will be concentrated in areas with a large number of unvaccinated children and active measles transmission. WHO, UNICEF and other partners will support DOH to increase campaign monitoring and Rapid Coverage Assessment (RCA) in these priority areas.

Good practices observed:

- Establishment of measles focal points and taskforces at regional, provincial and municipal level, meeting on a regular basis
- Recruitment of additional staff for vaccination purposes at regional, provincial and municipal level
- LGU support with incentives for vaccinators
- Adaptation of IEC materials to local context (e.g. in CAR for tourist influx)
- Department of Education (DepEd) school nurses oriented and trained to be vaccinators in schools (Region V)
- Use of free airtime on TV (Oriental Mindoro)
- City/Municipality with good coverage among 6 to 59 months have seen decline in cases in this age group.

Key needs identified so far:

- Old cold chain equipment such as vaccine carriers and vaccine storage refrigerators in need of replacement
- Proper vaccine carriers and sufficiently conditioned ice packs
- Prioritization and intensification of vaccination for (pockets of) unvaccinated children
- Redistribution/clarification of DoH guidelines on measles vaccination campaign
- Redistribution of laboratory testing guidelines in outbreak situations at health facility level
- Issuance of memorandum between DoH and Department of Education on school-based vaccination
- (Refresher) training for health workers on accurate diagnosis and treatment of measles and other vaccine preventable diseases
- (Refresher) training for health workers on Expanded Program of immunization (EPI).
- Need for additional staff to step up Rapid Coverage Assessments to look for unvaccinated children

Overview of UNICEF and WHO engagement so far

UNICEF are supporting with:

- Facilitation of procurement of additional 6,000,000 doses of measles and polio vaccines
- Provision of 3 tents to Region III (JB Lingad Memorial Regional Hospital, Dr Paulino Garcia Memorial Research and Medical Center, Bataan General Hospital)
- Deployment of additional manpower to support the national immunization team and DOH NCR
- Mobilization and technical support to Zamboanga del Norte, Samar and North Samar
- Planning for the measles outbreak response in DOH-BARMM

WHO are supporting with:

- Dissemination of key guidelines and IEC materials to health partners
- Updating of guidelines on:
 - o Primary Health Care Facilities and Hospitals
 - o Measles Post-Exposure Management
 - o Measles Case Classification and Management.
 - o Supplementary Immunization Activities (SIA) and Outbreak Immunization (OI).

Jointly, UNICEF-WHO are supporting with:

- Development of more detailed communication plan for measles outbreak response with DOH-HPCS
- Development of field monitoring tools and updating of Rapid Coverage Assessment (RCA) tool
- Ongoing monitoring of measles immunization activities and conducting RCA
- Technical support to DoH at all levels

Response plan

UNICEF and WHO are continuing to monitor the ongoing vaccination campaign to maximise the number of children covered.

WHO is planning to support DoH with nationwide (refresher) training in the Philippines Integrated Disease Surveillance and Reporting (PIDSRS) system, to improve rapid diagnosis and treatment of measles and other infectious diseases, as well as in the Expanded Program of immunization (EPI).

WHO is looking into the possibility to recruit additional health workers to support with vaccination in remote areas.

UNICEF will facilitate procurement of additional MR vaccines to cover school age vaccination activities.

Oriental Mindoro provincial health officer conducting RCA in barangay Poblacion, Puerto Galera

