

(Healing) Philippines' Situation amid Pandemic through Government Responsiveness in Securing COVID-19 Vaccine

Niñoval F. Pacaol*

Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City, Philippines

Received: 15 January 2021

Accepted: 17 January 2021

**Corresponding author:* ninoval.pacaol05@gmail.com

DOI 10.5001/omj.2021.103

Some implied that 2020 was a time of despair relative to the statistical data of the COVID-19 pandemic.¹ Among the anticipative remedies of such a global problem, vaccine tops the list in most countries' priorities and programs. On the one hand, in the November 2020 issue of the *Oman Medical Journal*, Al Awaidy and Khamis expressed that “the race for the coronavirus vaccine gives hope for millions of individuals” while highlighting some important concerns such as the accessibility of the vaccine to the countries who demand it.² With the approval of some vaccine candidates and massive vaccination in developed countries, the least developed nations struggle to secure a supply of vaccine for their people. In the Philippines, the government optimistically projected that by the first quarter of 2021 a COVID-19 vaccine will become available hoping for a “year of healing”.³ In December of 2020, debate among government officials and experts appeared on what vaccine should be purchased.⁴ Even some legislative agenda such as Charter Change emerges as an interest of some politicians while other legislators questioned its relevance and practicality amid the pandemic.⁷ In a nutshell, it is not law-making versus vaccination rather the alignment of law deliberation should and must cater to the real and extremely evident experiences of Filipino people that might even extend until next year if (quality) aid will not be given.

If healing (as used by the government) is equitable to the access to the vaccine, then it should not be perceived as a single-stage rather as a developmental process in lessening the stirring situation of the country. Vaccination may be the start but being accustomed and personally guided by the lessons of the crisis would likely increase the restorative effect of the vaccine. On top of this, the government's inspiration, diligence, and willpower are necessary to execute this goal. Setting the vision for twelve-month reality requires a committed and unyielding character throughout the year. Similarly, an approach of neutrality, disregarding the political identity of anyone, is a democratic practice distinguishing all Filipinos as the sovereign and chief concern by doing a unified plan while directing government focus onto the lens of vaccine accessibility where the former is safely enriched.

References:

1. Binns, C. & Low, W.Y. Public health in the Asia Pacific Region in 2020. *Asia Pacific Journal of Public Health* 2020 Dec; 32(8): 385–386.
2. Al Awaidy, S.T. & Khamis, F. (2020). Preparing the community for a vaccine against COVID-19. *Oman Medical Journal* 2020 Nov; 35(6): e193.
3. Parrocha, A. Palace hopes for 2021 as 'year of healing' [Internet]. *Philippine News Agency*. 2020 [cited 2021 January 9]; Available from: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1126038>
4. Ramos, C.M. Pangilinan: Duterte should've warned China not to sell less effective COVID vaccines [Internet]. *INQUIRER.NET*. 2020 [cited 2021 January 9]; Retrieved from: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1376578/pangilinan-duterte-shouldve-warned-china-not-to-sell-less-effective-covid-vaccines>
5. Yap, D.J. Lacson: A folly to open Cha-cha floodgates now [Internet]. *INQUIRER.NET*. 2021 [cited 2021 January 9]; Retrieved from: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1381335/lacson-a-folly-to-open-cha-cha-floodgates-now>