



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

04 May 2021

HON. FRANCISCO T. DUQUE III, MD, MSc
Secretary of Health

Dear **Secretary Duque**:

Greetings!

Pursuant to Republic Act 11223, otherwise known as the “Universal Health Care Act,” all health technologies that will be funded by the Department of Health and the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation shall undergo health technology assessment (HTA). This aims to ensure the rational utilization of various health technologies that will be funded by the government.

This has reference to the request of the Disease Prevention and Control Bureau (DPCB) to evaluate COVID-19 investigational drugs such as **dexamethasone** for the treatment of COVID-19.

Based on the evidence review of the Living Clinical Practice Guidelines (LCPG) Group, pooled estimates from subgroup analysis across the different types of corticosteroids (e.g. methylprednisolone, hydrocortisone, dexamethasone) showed benefit in terms of reducing 28-day mortality with dexamethasone use compared to placebo/standard of care (RR = 0.90, 95% CI 0.83 to 0.98).

The LCPG Group *recommends the use* of dexamethasone in patients with COVID-19 infection who require supplemental oxygenation (i.e., including high-flow device, non-invasive, invasive mechanical ventilation and ECMO). On the other hand, they *recommend against the use* of systemic corticosteroids in patients with COVID-19 infection but not requiring oxygen supplementation.

Further to the abovementioned recommendations, upon processing the request the Health Technology Assessment Council (HTAC) took note of the following:

- Dexamethasone is already issued with a Certificate of Product Registration by the Philippine Food and Drug Administration (FDA);
- It is currently listed in the Philippine National Formulary (PNF) with the following forms and dosage strength, and indications:

Drug	Forms and dosage strength	Indications
Dexamethasone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● <i>Oral</i>: 500 micrograms, 750 micrograms, 3 mg, and 4 mg tablet● <i>Inj.</i>: 4 mg/mL (as sodium phosphate), 1 mL and 2 mL	Management of a wide variety of inflammation and allergic disorders responsive to corticosteroid therapy; management of asthma and related bronchospastic disorders; treatment

	ampule / vial (IM, IV) <i>Inj:</i> 5 mg/mL (as sodium phosphate), 1 mL ampule (IM, IV)	of cerebral edema caused by malignancy in intensive therapy or in emergencies; prevention of nausea and vomiting induced by the cancer chemotherapy; treatment of all conditions for which corticosteroid therapy is indicated except adrenal deficiency states; replacement therapy in adrenal insufficiency.
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Given these, the HTAC hereby validates that currently PNF-listed drug topics which complied with the documentary requirements of the previous Formulary Executive Council (FEC) are eligible for the funding/reimbursement of DOH and PhilHealth.

In addition, the indications for dexamethasone include “*management of a wide variety of inflammation and allergic disorders responsive to corticosteroid therapy*” as well as “*treatment for all conditions for which corticosteroid therapy is indicated*”. Both of these encompass the use of dexamethasone in patients with COVID-19 infection requiring oxygen supplementation. Thus, there is no need for a separate HTAC recommendation for a COVID-19 indication.

Should there be any questions or clarifications on any of the information shared herewith, please do not hesitate to let us know them. We remain grateful for the opportunity to work with you. Thank you very much and best regards.

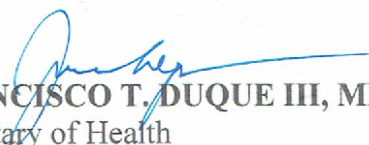
Respectfully yours,

For the Health Technology Assessment Council (HTAC):



MARITA V. TOLENTINO-REYES, MD
 Chair, HTAC

Approval of the HTAC Recommendation:



FRANCISCO T. DUQUE III, MD, MSc
 Secretary of Health

CC: Undersecretary Gerardo V. Bayugo, MD, MPH, CESO I
 Assistant Secretary Atty. Charade B. Mercado-Grande