



HEALTH TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT UNIT (HTAU)

Annual Report 2019

1. INTRODUCTION: HTA INSTITUTIONALIZATION TO ACHIEVE UHC

Ensuring access to effective, efficient, affordable and quality healthcare for every Filipino is one of the goals of Republic Act 11223 or “Universal Health Care (UHC) Law.” In the collective vision to progressively realize UHC, different health interventions and technologies would need to undergo a systematic process called Health Technology Assessment (HTA) to serve as a fair and transparent priority setting mechanism in the development of policies and programs, regulation, and determination of a range of entitlements to all Filipinos.

To ensure its effective implementation, the UHC Law mandated the creation of the Health Technology Assessment Council (HTAC), which is composed of nine core committee members. To assist the Core Committee, the following Subcommittees, each with three non-voting members, were likewise created: the Subcommittees for (1) drugs, (2) vaccines, (3) clinical equipment and devices, (4) medical and surgical procedures, (5) preventive and promotive health services, (6) traditional medicine; (7) other health technologies – with three members each – are created to assist the core committee. The said council’s mandate is to facilitate the provision of financing and coverage recommendations on health technologies financed by DOH and PhilHealth, oversee and coordinate the HTA process, and review and assess existing DOH and PhilHealth benefit packages.

In support of these mandates, the DOH-Health Technology Assessment Unit (HTAU) was established under the Health Regulation Team (HRT) to provide evidence generation and secretariat support on the implementation of HTA.

2. HTAU: STRATEGIC GOAL

To institutionalize HTA as a fair and transparent priority setting mechanism that shall be recommendatory to DOH and PhilHealth in informing policy decisions that will determine the range of entitlements under UHC.

3. HTAU: OBJECTIVES

- Create and provide technical secretariat support to HTAC in overseeing implementation of processes
- Establish and implement standard processes and methods on HTA
- Conduct assessments that will inform HTAC recommendations

4. HTAU ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2019

4.1. HTA Governance

4.1.1. Drafting of the HTA policy and implementation guides

- February to April 2019: The AO as well as the HTA Process and Methods Guides were drafted and peer-reviewed by international experts even before the HTAC creation. These were then presented to the HTAC for review upon their creation.
- May 2019 onwards: Coordination meetings were conducted with DOST-PCHRD on the institutionalization of HTA in the country.

4.1.2. Creation of the HTAC

- February to July 2019: The process of selection for the creation of the HTAC was facilitated through an official call for nomination and the establishment of the Selection Committee (*DPO 2019-1605, 8 April 2019*).
- October 2019: The HTAC was officially created (*DPO 2019-5496, 10 October 2019*). The Secretary of Health chaired their first meeting on 11 October 2019 to emphasize the crucial role of HTA in achieving UHC and to officially orient the members on their priorities, roles and responsibilities.



*HTAC's first meeting with the SOH
11 October 2019, DOH Convention Hall*

- A total of three (3) HTAC meetings and one (1) strategic planning workshop were conducted in 2019 which focused on the following agenda items:
 - Setting of HTAC priorities, roles and responsibilities
 - Review of the draft AO, and its annexes, i.e., HTA process and methods guides

4.2. International Projects and Initiatives

4.2.1. Presentation of research in international conference

- April 2019: Four HTA research outputs were presented at the HTAsiaLink2019 conference; three of which won major awards.



*The Philippine delegation for the HTAsiaLink 2019
26 April 2019*

4.2.2. Memorandum of Agreement with Thailand to build HTA capacity

- October 2019: Discussions with Thailand and DOST were facilitated to process the revision and review of the draft MOU between Thailand and Philippines which aims to strengthen the country capacity on HTA.

4.2.3. Conduct of the ASEAN Commitment Study of the Philippines on the Follow-Up Assessment on the HTA Capacity Building among ASEAN Member States (AMS)

- October-December 2019: The protocol was developed and have been officially approved by the AMS. The survey tools were disseminated among AMS, for accomplishment and presentation in 2020.

4.3. Capacity Building Activities

4.3.1. HTA Symposium and Workshop in partnership with the Imperial College London (ICL) [January 2019]

- A symposium was held on 14 January 2019 in Manila to introduce and discuss the basic principles of HTA, evidence informed decision making, and the need for a tailored Philippine reference case in economic evaluation. It was attended by key stakeholder groups, including: researchers, health professionals, medical societies, academics, and industry.
- Following the symposium was a four-day training workshop on 15-18 January in Manila which aimed to build local technical skills and capacities for undertaking and interpreting economic evaluations of healthcare interventions. The workshop has been tailored where possible to suit local priorities as identified as part the gap analysis conducted during the inception phase. This was attended by the HTA Unit and selected academia.
- The symposium and workshop were led by the HTAU with technical assistance from ICL as the trainers and developers of all training materials.



*HTA Symposium and Workshop with Imperial College London
Hotel Jen, 14-18 January 2019*

4.3.2. Evidence Appraisal Training and HTA Forum in partnership with the WHO and Thailand Health Intervention and Technology Assessment Program (HITAP) [October 2019]

- As the DOH and PhilHealth commit to achieve UHC, an evidence appraisal training was conducted on 28-30 October 2019 in Clark, Pampanga to enrich the technical rigor of key players as it relates to the law. The event aimed to strengthen the technical capacity on appraisal methods to make evidence-informed recommendations on coverage decisions. The three-day training was conducted by experts from UK (Prof. Anthony Culyer), Thailand HITAP (led by Dr. Yot Teerawattananon), and the WHO (Dr. Tessa Tan

Torres-Edejer). Attendees were members of HTAC, HTAU, and representatives from PhilHealth and DOST.



*Attendees of the Evidence Appraisal Workshop
Quest Hotel, 28-30 October 2019*



*HTAC Chair Dr. Marita Reyes at the Evidence Appraisal Workshop
Quest Hotel, 28-30 October 2019*

- Heads of various national government agencies together HTA key players gathered on 31 October 2019 in Manila to show support in the collective vision to progressively realize Universal Health Care (UHC) in the Philippines. Aligned with the FOURmula One Plus for Health framework, performance accountability is a fundamental step toward UHC. Health Secretary Francisco T. Duque III reiterated the role of HTA in order to achieve this. *“... HTA ensures good governance and accountability toward achieving UHC. It is through this meeting that we as stakeholders can be fully oriented with HTA,”* said Sec. Duque in his special message.

Secretary Fortunato dela Pena of Department of Science and Technology and BGen. Ricardo Morales, PhilHealth President also expressed their support for HTA as an integral part of UHC. *“The country has a long way to go in institutionalizing HTA and we at DOH recognize that we cannot do this alone. We need to work together to make this happen,”* Undersecretary Domingo stressed on his welcoming remarks.

Also in attendance was Honorable Angelina Tan, Chair of the Committee on Health of the House of Representatives and one of the sponsors of the UHC Act, who echoed the same views. *“We are all in this work together, no spectators. Everyone is a player and member of the cheering squad at the same time,”* she said.

Experts from UK, Thailand and the World Health Organization also shared their international experiences on the value of HTA as a part of the health system. Vital partners from other agencies, academe, professional medical organization, civil society organization and the industry were likewise given the opportunity to provide insights on their involvement in the HTA process and how can they take advantage of the new mechanism.



*Secretary Francisco T. Duque III of DOH, BGen. Ricardo Morales of PhilHealth, and Secretary Fortunato dela Pena of DOST unite for HTA
Sulo Riviera Hotel, 31 October 2019*



*The HTAC at the HTA High-Level Policy Forum
Sulo Riviera Hotel, 31 October 2019*

4.4. Rapid Reviews and Assessments

4.4.1. Assessments

- Two (2) assessments were completed namely:
 - o Renal replacement Therapy
 - o HIV screening

4.4.2. Rapid review

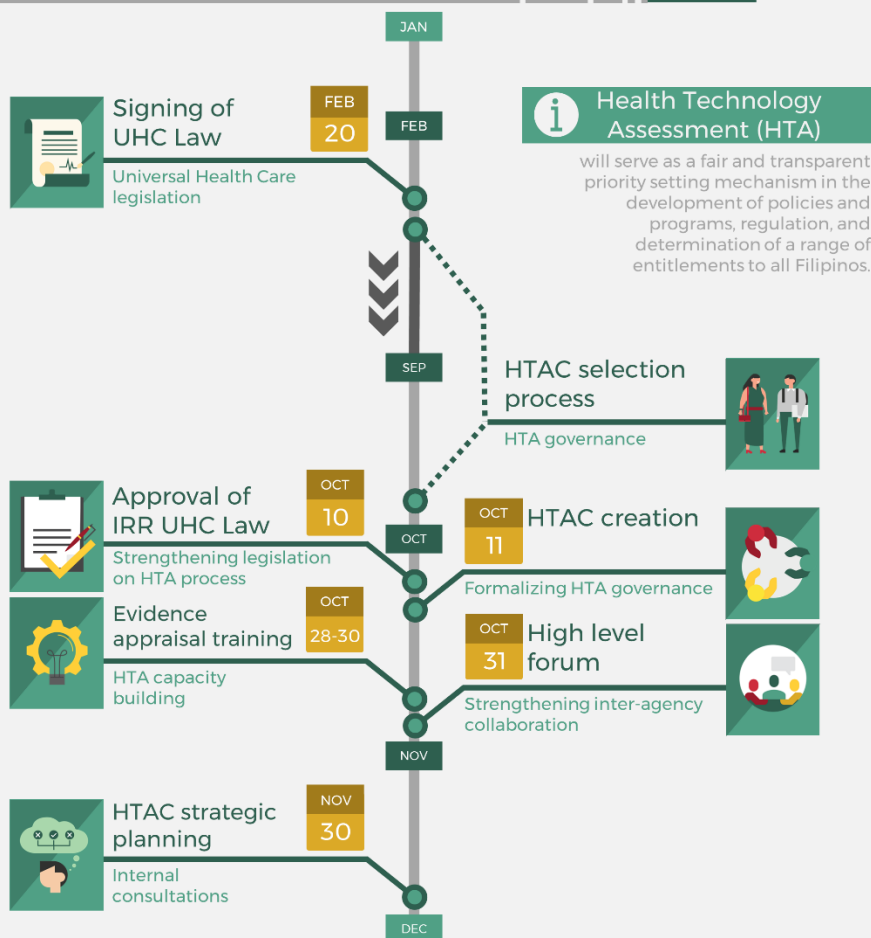
- One (1) rapid review (i.e, rapid review on Drone delivery system) was completed.

5. 2020: CONTINUING THE PATH TO HTA INSTITUTIONALIZATION

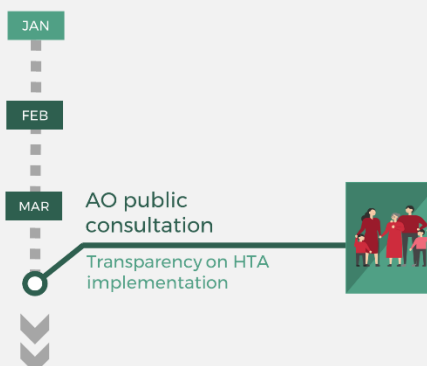
The year 2019 was essentially the commencement of the path to fully establish HTA as mandated by UHC Law. Many work streams have been created in 2019 and these are expected to continue and be accomplished by 2020 particularly the signing and issuance of the HTA AO and the HTA Process and Methods that will officially lay down the implementation of HTA.

Road to HTA institutionalization

2019 2020



2019 2020



To know more, check out uhc.com.ph or email us at hta.philippines@gmail.com



Universal Health Care
Alamin mo, kasama ka dito.

