



## PROCUREMENT SERVICE LEADS EFFORTS FOR THE VACCINATION OF DBM, PS-PHILGEPS, AND GPPB-TSO EMPLOYEES

### AT A GLANCE:

- Majority of the employees of DBM and its attached agencies are now COVID-19 vaccinated with first dose
- Procurement Service takes the lead in organizing the mass vaccination program for all enlisted personnel
- AFG Director Christine Marie L. Suntay hopes that this will boost the client-agencies' confidence and trust in transacting with PS-DBM amid the pandemic

Not long after the national government's announcement to commence the vaccination of qualified individuals under the A4 priority group category, a total of 870 employees including outsourced personnel of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), its attached agencies Procurement Service - Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PS-PhilGEPS) and Government Procurement Policy Board – Technical Support Office (GPPB-TSO), received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine on 21 June 2021 at the DBM Central Office in San Miguel, Manila.

Facilitated by the Manila Health Department, this employee mass immunization forms part of the COVID-19 #VaccineNation campaign of the local government of Manila that targets to inoculate not only its residents but also those who work at the nation's capital.

But ultimately, this would not have been possible if not for the efforts and initiative of the key pandemic response officials and personnel of the Procurement Service – DBM (PS-DBM) under the leadership of the Administrative and Finance Group (AFG) Director Christine Marie L. Suntay.

It was in 16 March 2021 when the PS-DBM COVID-19 Quick Response Team (QRT) first conducted a survey “to evaluate and assess the potential acceptance of vaccine among its personnel.”

At a time when the Philippines just began rolling out COVID vaccinations, vaccine hesitancy was apparent—even among the PS-DBM community; so much so that the QRT had to extend its deadline for the enlistment until April 26, more than a month after its initial sensing.

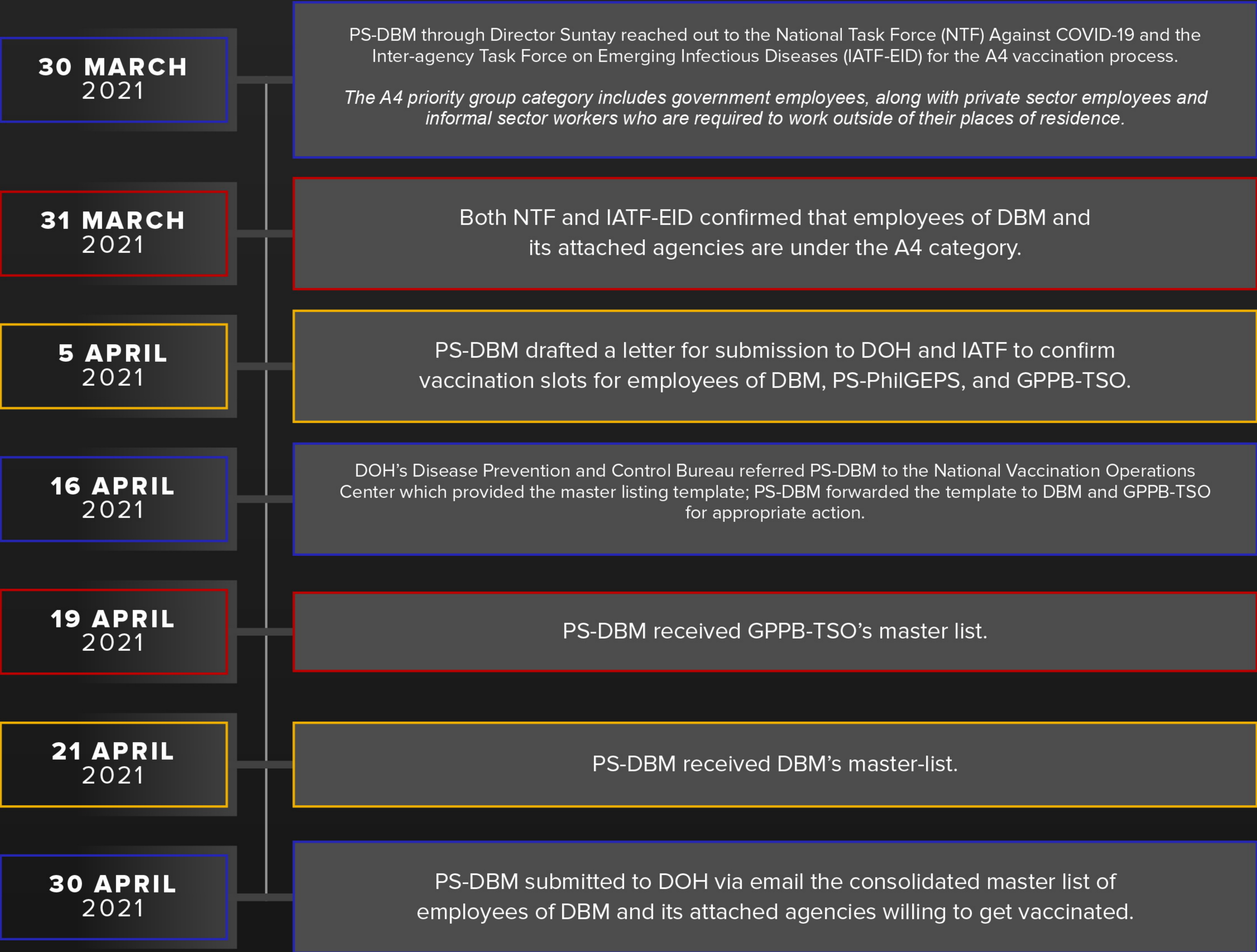
“There’s a level of disconnect and worry... I personally asserted the extension and created the email campaign for the last survey and last chance in being included to the list,” says Mirra Reyes, one of the QRT secretariats. In the said email, QRT reiterated that as much as it highly encourages employees to consider taking the job, it should be a voluntary decision. The attempt was not done in vain; from less than 50% of the PS-DBM office population, the ending percentage increased to 77%.

While all of these were taking place, Director Suntay was working behind the scene to conceive a greater cause. Over the same period of finalizing the PS-DBM records from March to April, she was in constant coordination with key government offices involved in the country’s pandemic response including the Department of Health (DOH), the National Task Force (NTF) Against COVID-19, and the Inter-agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID), among others.

Eventually, with PS-DBM’s relentless efforts, employees of DBM and of GPPB-TSO have also been included in the master list submitted to the DOH.

“I share the same opinion with the rest of the DBM, PS-DBM, and GPPB-TSO management in believing that vaccination is one of the best ways to protect oneself and our community. Given that our colleagues are risking their health to fulfill their responsibilities to the government, we must be equally committed to keeping them safe during this pandemic. Providing access to vaccines is a major step in protecting DBM employees and its client-agencies,” Director Suntay says.

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS LEADING TO THE CONDUCT OF DBM EMPLOYEE VACCINATION



*Note: The timeline only shows the highlights during the coordination process, other relevant developments took place in between the included dates*





Following health assessment with a medical professional, a PS-DBM employee proceeds to the vaccination area to get his first shot of the COVID-19 vaccine.

On 3 June 2021, QRT had to update employee details as well as the master list to exclude those who have already been vaccinated through their local government unit (LGU). Finally, on June 21, with efficient collaboration among QRT, General Services Division and Human Resource Development Division representatives under AFG of PS-DBM, and designated coordinators from DBM and GPPB-TSO, the much-anticipated mass immunization took place.

Following successful inoculation, PS-DBM distributed appreciation cupcakes and COVID-19 vaccination kits which contain wearable air purifier, KN95 face masks, sanitizing gel, and alcohol.

“I am proud to report that we have vaccinated majority of DBM employees through this joint vaccination program and with the help of the Department of Health and the Manila City Health Department,” Director Suntay declares.

Of the 870 total tally, 231 were PS-DBM personnel. “Lahat ng gusto magpabakuna sa atin, nabakunahan,” Reyes confirms.

The QRT emphasizes that the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine does not afford full protection, thus, strict compliance to minimum health protocols is still a must. This reminder still applies even after receiving the second dose scheduled on 19 July 2021 at the same venue.

Those who have not been vaccinated will have to personally register through the Manila LGU, but the QRT is looking into the possibility of organizing another schedule for vaccine rollout, among other alternative plans. The vaccination for the employees of the regional depot and sub-depot offices, on the other hand, is now being prioritized. They are, however, encouraged to coordinate with their respective LGUs for earlier schedule.

Director Suntay is optimistic that this initiative will instill into the public a sense of confidence towards vaccines. More importantly, she hopes that this inculcates an improved level of trust among the agency’s clientele, partner merchants, suppliers, and other stakeholders. After all, their satisfaction and safety remain as top priority especially in times of a global health crisis.

“I am hopeful that the same solidarity will be demonstrated in our future initiatives to solve the challenges brought about by this pandemic,” Director Suntay concludes.

## BY PS-DBM COMMUNICATIONS

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