

## PS TAKES PART IN THE DBM VAX DRIVE FOR BOOSTER SHOTS AGAINST COVID-19



An employee of PS-DBM receives her vaccine booster shot for increased protection against COVID-19.

### AT A GLANCE:

- PS-DBM Main Office employees received their vaccine booster amid surge in cases
- The second wave of the vaccine booster roll-out will soon be conducted
- PS Depots are commended for initiating efforts to ensure protection against COVID

Following the holiday celebrations, the Philippines welcomed 2022 with a COVID-19 surge that accelerated at a pace not seen since the start of the pandemic. On 17 January 2022, the country logged an all-time high with 37,070 reported cases.

The Procurement Service - Department of Budget and Management (PS-DBM) is not new to surges. When the cases in the agency in August 2021 catapulted to around 200 after having conducted mass testing among employees, the PS-DBM was placed on lockdown for a week.

With thousands of new infections still reported on average each day, the highly-transmissible Omicron variant continues to rampage the population. This warrants the urgent need not only to get vaccinated but also to be boosted.

From January 19 to 20, 2022, roughly six months after the administration of their vaccine doses, a total of 761 personnel of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) — including its attached agencies PS-Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System and Government Procurement Policy Board-Technical Support Office — were inoculated with the Moderna booster shot. The vaccination drive, organized by the DBM in collaboration with the Manila Health Department, was held at the DBM Central Office in San Miguel, Manila.



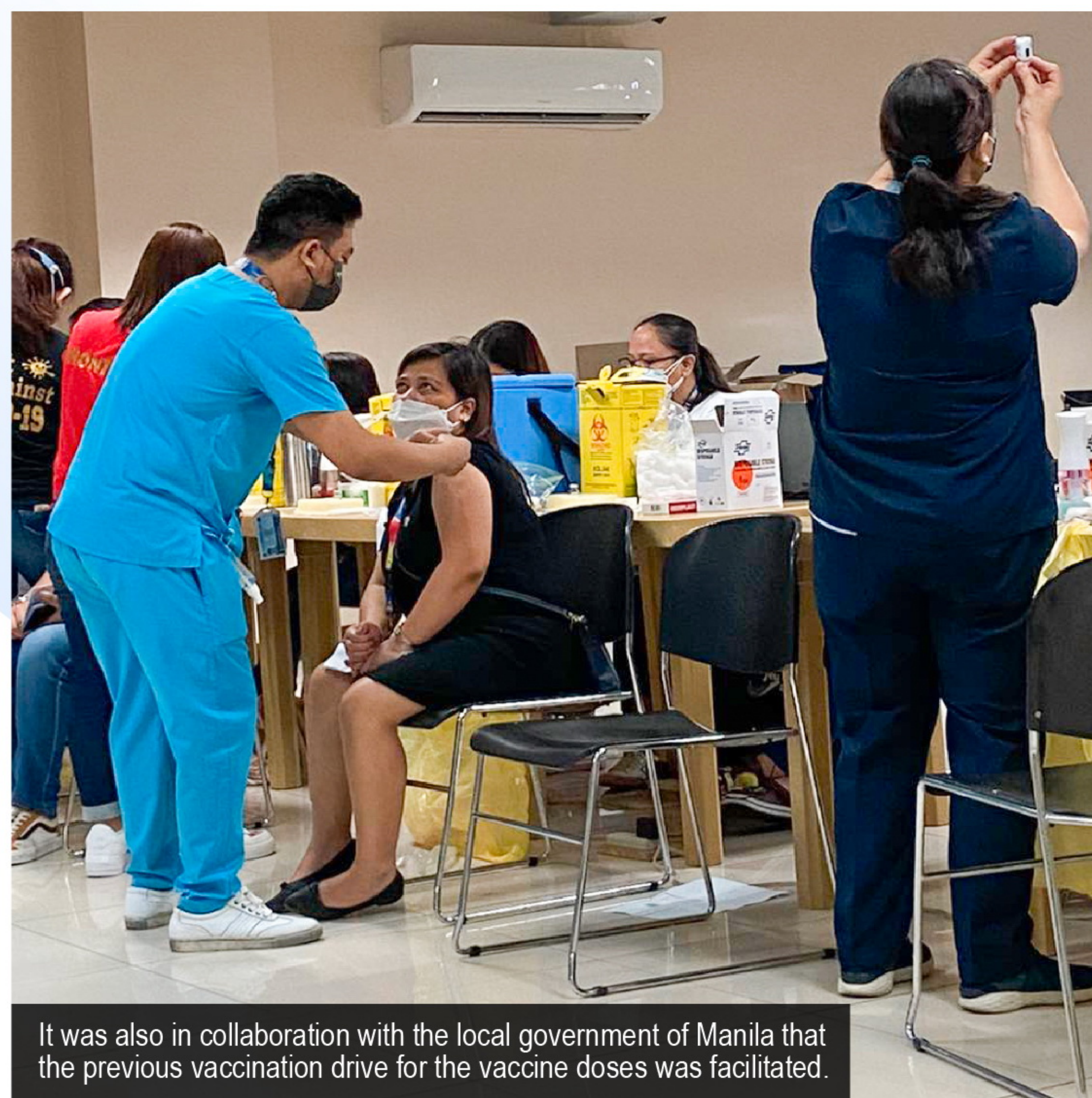
Employees are given breakfast meal in appreciation of their willingness to get boosted.



The PS-DBM Quick Response Team (QRT) reported that of the more than 700 individuals who availed of their slots, 218 were PS-PhilGEPS employees. This only forms part of the other efforts of QRT to maintain a safe and healthy work environment. The QRT updates the workforce with the daily tally of positive cases, close contacts, and recovered cases. It also caters to the wellness of employees by conducting swab tests, providing health kits, and implementing alternative work arrangements.

As of writing, the PS-DBM has no active cases, with 278 personnel already recovered. Only recently, a survey was conducted for the second wave of the vaccination booster roll-out — the schedule of which is yet to be finalized.

“To raise awareness, we are regularly sending out emails to encourage everyone to get vaccinated and its benefits to their families, society, and to themselves. In addition, tokens are given to personnel who get vaccinated,” says QRT.



It was also in collaboration with the local government of Manila that the previous vaccination drive for the vaccine doses was facilitated.

Numerous preventative measures have also been in place since the outbreak of the infection. The PS-DBM, manned by a skeleton workforce, continues to strengthen its digital platforms such as the Virtual Store, Online Appointment Portal, social media accounts, and its website to limit face-to-face encounters with client-agencies, partner merchants, and other stakeholders. The use of online facilities when transacting with the agency lessens the chances of spreading the virus, and thus result in further flattening the curve. For transactions that require physical interaction, standard health protocols are strictly enforced. The presentation of vaccination cards of all entities visiting the PS-PhilGEPS offices in Manila is also now required.

As for the PS regional depots and sub-depots, the QRT remains just as active in ensuring that all their queries and concerns about COVID-related protocols and policies are addressed and well attended to.

“Based on our vaccination statistics, the PS Depots have been very proactive in getting our colleagues in the provinces vaccinated. We commend their efforts as well as their initiatives in making sure our workforce is healthy and protected,” says QRT.

“While most of us have already been vaccinated and received booster shots, the best practice is still to observe social distancing, wear a mask, and wash hands regularly,” QRT adds.

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More employees are expected to get boosted as soon as the second wave of the vaccination drive commences.