



The power of many: building a national meningitis coalition in the Philippines

Meningitis is a critical but under-recognised public health threat in the Philippines. Available national data from the Department of Health show that it has 40-50% case fatality rates, frequent delays in diagnosis, and probable under-reporting due to diagnostic and surveillance gaps. To address this, CoMO member the **Philippine Foundation for Vaccination (PFV)** launched “DefeatMeningitisPH”, a national coalition to push for greater recognition of meningitis and action to reduce meningitis-related deaths and disability.

The coalition

To create DefeatMeningitisPH, PFV invited key stakeholders to join: major medical societies, academic institutions, public health organisations and private sector partners. They successfully recruited coalition members with a range of expertise – in infectious disease, paediatrics, neurology, microbiology, pharmacy, nursing

and public health. This will ensure the coalition can provide well-informed guidance on meningitis prevention, diagnosis, treatment and long-term care. They then held a series of meetings to define the coalition’s identity and aims, which helped create a sense of shared purpose.

Organisation

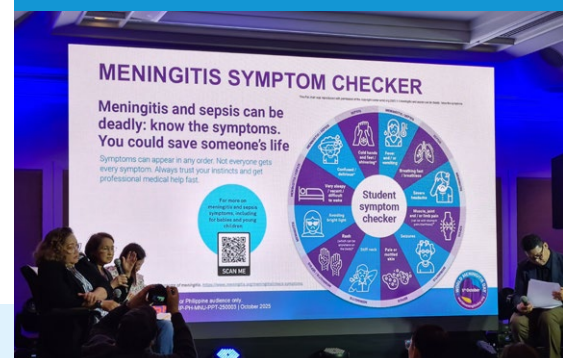
Philippine Foundation for Vaccination (PFV)

Background

Not-for-profit organisation whose mission is to improve vaccine availability for children and adults nationally

Location

Philippines



National launch and professional engagement

DefeatMeningitisPH was formally launched through a high-visibility event at the **Philippine National Immunization Conference**. The event saw participation from all the conference attendees, a total

of 491 participants: 148 medical doctors, 140 nurses, 23 midwives, 41 allied health professionals, 39 speakers and 100 organising committee members and VIP participants. The launch event made the coalition known to a wide range of professionals who play key roles in vaccination, early diagnosis and referral, and preventing meningitis.

Achievements

Within just four months, PFV achieved:

- The formal establishment of a national, multi-sector meningitis coalition.
- A high-profile national launch at a major conference.
- Wide media and mass communication reach, including three print articles, 24 online articles and fifteen social media posts; and an estimated reach of 11.1 million combined social media followers.
- Conversations with more than ten legislators from the House of Representatives, laying the groundwork for a future resolution to officially recognise

5 October (World Meningitis Day) as Philippine Meningitis Day.

- A defined action framework aligned with the goals of the World Health Organization (WHO)'s Road Map to Defeat Meningitis (see below).

World Meningitis Day branding and messaging were incorporated across coalition materials, presentations and public communications to strengthen alignment with global advocacy.

The team also noted other learnings and promising signs:

- Health professionals highlighted the importance of including meningitis awareness across disciplines rather than treating it as a niche disease.
- Coalition partners were more confident engaging policymakers using WHO-aligned messaging.
- Media partners were very keen to provide future coverage due to the relevance of meningitis to child and adult health.

Future objectives

Within twelve months of its launch, DefeatMeningitisPH aims to:



1. Train at least 3,000 health workers nationwide.
2. Advocate for a pilot of polymerase chain reaction methods for diagnosing meningitis in at least five hospitals. This will compensate for the low use of lumbar punctures and improve surveillance.
3. Get a Philippine Meningitis Day resolution in parliament.
4. Reach at least one million people through digital and mass media awareness.
5. Advocate to establish a Philippine Department of Health Technical Working Group on meningitis.

The coalition plans to reach its aims through coordinated national advocacy, professional engagement, public awareness and policy action.

Further resources

 www.philvaccine.org

 [Facebook page](#)

Contacts

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The World Meningitis Day Advocacy Fund enables national initiatives to move from concept to action. Even modest funding can have significant impact when used strategically to convene partners, amplify messages, and align advocacy with WHO commitments.”

Bryan Posadas, project lead

