Developing the Proxy Consent Protocol in the Philippines

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The Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) is the focal government inter-agency coordinating body of the Philippine government to monitor the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Committee on Children and HIV/AIDS under the Council for the Welfare of Children Board has been revitalized primarily to respond to the issues and concerns on children and HIV.
Child Protection x SRH

- Issues that confront children and young people:
  - High teenage pregnancy rate
  - Increasing rate of new HIV infection
  - High over-all prevalence of violence against children (NBS-VAC 2016)

- Enactment of laws (HIV and RPRH) which served as policy barriers for minors to access life-saving services
Proxy Consent refers to the process by which people with the legal right to consent to medical treatment for themselves or for a minor or a ward delegate that right to another person.
Children and young people are not getting tested for HIV.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>15-17</th>
<th>18-20</th>
<th>21-24</th>
<th>25 and older</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative estimate of HIV infection by December 2016</td>
<td>1,976</td>
<td>6,157</td>
<td>15,791</td>
<td>37,416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual ever diagnosed with HIV</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>2,198</td>
<td>8,364</td>
<td>28,717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% diagnosed of the estimated infection</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>77%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2016 AIDS Epidemic Model (AEM), November 2016
HIV/AIDS & ART Registry of the Philippines (HARP), December 2016
Adoption of the Protocol on the Provision of Proxy Consent for HIV Testing Services of Children Vulnerable to and at Risk of HIV by the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) Board and the Philippine National AIDS Council (PNAC).

Pre-testing and Capacity building of the health care providers and social workers in demo sites on the algorithms and protocols; refinement and process documentation

Consultation to validate conditions with national government agencies, local government units and implementing partners

Defining of conditions and development of algorithms and tools; working with “champions”

Documentation of service provision to adolescents in demo sites; Consultation with the regional offices of the Department of Health and Implementing Partners

Review frameworks, policies/ laws in relation to adolescent access to services
Meaningful engagement of children and young people

In keeping with the principle of meaningful and ethical child and youth participation, they have been consulted in the development of the protocol on proxy consent.

PROTOCOL ON THE PROVISION OF PROXY CONSENT FOR HIV TESTING SERVICES OF CHILDREN VULNERABLE TO AND AT RISK OF HIV

1. RATIONALE

From the year 2011 to 2015, the Philippines has recorded an unprecedented 230% increase in the number of new HIV infections from among 15-19 years old or the young key affected population (YKAP). The HIV infection within this age group is mostly sexually transmitted among males who are having sex with males (50%), males who have sex with both males and females (26%), and males who are having sex with females (9%). Aside from sexual transmission, 7% of the new infections come from sharing infected needles.

Furthermore, based on the 2016 disaggregated HIV care cascade (diagnosis, linkage to care, treatment, and viral load testing) data, it is notable that the young M/TSM are in disadvantageous position in accessing and retaining in care and treatment.
INTEGRATED SRH/HIV SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

- Schools, CSO/NGO, youth organisations, peer educators encourage adolescent to use reproductive health services
- Reproductive health services at primary, secondary and tertiary level. RHU, SHC, hospitals, treatment hubs, and CSO
- Proxy consent by CSO or LGU gives high risk minors access to HIV testing
- SDN coordinated by LGU and/or CSO
  - Legal and protection services: LGU-DSWD, police, BCPC
  - Financial support services: Philhealth, LGU, DSWD, CSO/NGO
  - Case manager assists adolescents
  - Psychosocial services & emotional and spiritual support: Mental health, specialized support groups (AHIV, PLHIV, pregnant teens), LGU-DSWD, peer educators, youth networks, church, friends and family

- Reduced number of teen pregnancy and HIV cases
- Reduced number of deaths due to pregnancy complication
Ways forward

❖ To ensure the institutionalization of the Protocol, the CWC together with its Committee on Children and HIV/AIDS will advocate for the inclusion of the Protocol in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the newly enacted law of the Philippines on HIV/AIDS.

❖ Continuously monitor the implementation of the proxy consent protocol and track the progress of trainings for proxy consent among service providers.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Brokenshire Women Center (BCW) and City Government of Davao
CebuPlus Advocacy Inc. (CPAI) and Cebu City Government of Cebu
Community and Family Services International (CFSI) and City Government of Pasay
Family Planning Organization of the Philippines (FPOP Iloilo), and City Government of Iloilo
Human Development and Empowerment Services (HDES) and City Government of Zamboanga

To all social workers and health care providers trained on the provision of proxy consent and case management

Consultants and champions from the Government, CSOs, adolescents and youth networks