Policy Brief on the Design Reality-Gap Analysis of the Electronic Premium Remittance System (EPRS)

Abstract / Rationale

As PhilHealth progressively realizes the Universal Health Care (UHC), its information technology should be able to keep up in addressing and meeting the demands of the UHC law. The Electronic Premium Reporting System (EPRS) is one of the systems developed by PhilHealth as it also gears towards digitalization. The EPRS is a web-based application designed to maintain an updated membership and premium contribution database for the employed sector for it provides employers to manage, pay and remit their premiums online. The use of the EPRS was made mandatory only in 2012 as PhilHealth has only realized its advantage in ensuring ease and timely processing of employer reports.

As time passed by, several enhancements were already done to the EPRS such as online account registration, generation of preliminary employee's premium remittance list, statement of premium accounts, payment posting, and auto-computation of penalties. These enhancements were all made to ensure that it meets the mandates existing policies and to address the ever-changing needs of its users.

To assess the success or failure, a design-reality gap analysis on the EPRS using the ITPOSMO model was conducted to explore the gap between the information system's design and the reality of its implementation focusing on the seven dimensions namely: Information, Technology, Process, Objectives, Staffing, Management, and Other factors.

Discussion

A qualitative research method was done to obtain a more in-depth and detailed insight into the collected data. The functionality of the EPRS was evaluated and assessed by reviewing the existing PhilHealth issuances, system requirement documents, user manuals, and other electronic or printed documents and interviews were done with the system developer, implementer, and end-user (business owners) using a structured questionnaire. The thematic analysis was also used to examine the perspectives of each key informant concerning the ITPOSMO model to highlight the similarities, differences, and unanticipated insights.

Conclusion

PhilHealth as one of the implementing arm of the government towards UHC must ensure that its information technology system can catch up with the changes imposed by the UHC law. Moreover, its information technology must be able to adopt the current trends in the IT world. The EPRS is one of the systems of PhilHealth that has led to the digital transformation of its services. It has provided its clients with utmost ease, convenience, and security. However, continuous enhancements must be made to catch up with the ever-changing needs of its clients to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the data.

Source: PhilHealth Stats and Charts for 1ˢᵗ Semester of 2020

The lack of certain policies such as Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) or Work Instruction (Wins) should be developed for uniform implementation. Moreover, training for both implementer and user should be provided to ensure a uniform understanding of the system and how it works.