

# TAMANG SAGOT

## PhilHealth Circular No. 2018-0009

### **“Use of Restricted Antimicrobials in PhilHealth-accredited Health Care Institutions in Accordance with the requirements of the Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance Program (ARSP)”**

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#### **1. What is ARSP?**

Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance Program or ARSP is a program of the Department of Health that aims to provide critical inputs to the DOH's effort to promote rational drug use by determining the status and trends of antimicrobial resistance of selected bacteria to specific antibiotics.

#### **2. What is ARSP accreditation?**

ARSP accreditation is the evaluation process conducted by the Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance Reference Laboratory (ARSRL) of Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM) to ensure quality of the processes and results from hospital laboratories.

#### **3. Why does a hospital need ARSP accreditation?**

Not all hospitals will need ARSP accreditation. Also, ARSP accreditation is not required for all hospitals. It is needed only by PhilHealth-accredited hospitals who admit patients who may potentially require restricted antimicrobials. Hospitals without ARSP accreditation that use restricted antimicrobials may incur a violation during PhilHealth monitoring.

#### **4. Where does a hospital apply for ARSP accreditation?**

Applications for ARSP accreditation should be addressed to ARSRL of RITM. The [forms](#) and [requirements](#) are published in their website.

For more information on the ARSP accreditation process, hospitals may contact the following:

**Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance Program**  
Research Institute for Tropical Medicine – DOH  
9002 Research Drive, Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City 1781  
D.L. (02) 809-9763 / T.L. (02) 8072631 to 32 loc. 243  
Email: [secretariat@arsp.com.ph](mailto:secretariat@arsp.com.ph)  
Website: [www.arsp.com.ph](http://www.arsp.com.ph)

#### **5. How long is the validity of ARSP accreditation?**

The ARSP Accreditation provided by RITM is valid for three (3) years.

#### **6. Does PhilHealth conduct its own survey for ARSP accreditation?**

PhilHealth no longer conducts additional surveys in relation to ARSP accreditation. PhilHealth recognizes and uses the list of ARSP-accredited hospitals provided by RITM.

## **7. How does PhilHealth know that a hospital is ARSP accredited?**

RITM regularly provides the updated list of ARSP-accredited hospitals to PhilHealth.

## **8. What are restricted antimicrobials?**

These are antimicrobials identified by the Formulary Executive Council and the National Antibiotic Guidelines Committee. The list is part of the Philippine National Formulary (PNF) Essential Medicines List (EML), which can be downloaded from the [DOH](#) and [PhilHealth](#) websites. Based on the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of the PNF EML, the following are the restricted antimicrobials: cefepime, ertapenem, meropenem, vancomycin, amphotericin B, voriconazole, colistin, micafungin, aztreonam and linezolid.

## **9. What happens DURING the transition period?**

The transition period covers the entire ARSP accreditation application process and ends in June 2019. This gives the hospitals ample time to complete their application without incurring a violation for using restricted antimicrobials provided, that during PhilHealth monitoring activities:

- ✓ They will present a copy of the documents provided by the ARSRL of RITM. This can either be the Acknowledgement Letter for Phase 1 or Notification for Compliance to Phase 2; and
- ✓ They have attached to the patient charts the culture results of patients who have been given restricted antimicrobials. These should also be readily available during monitoring.

## **10. What happens AFTER the transition period?**

The transition period ends in June 2019. Starting July 2019, in order to use restricted antimicrobials, hospitals have the following options:

- Be accredited as ARSP laboratory and have either of the following:
  - DOH trained chairperson of the Infectious Control Committee or Antimicrobial Stewardship Committee
  - Board-certified infectious disease specialist who shall authorize the use of restricted antimicrobials per patient.
- If not yet ARSP accredited, outsource with an ARSP-accredited laboratory thru a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)

All these documents – Certificate of Training on AMS, Diplomate Certificate of IDS or valid MOA, should be provided to the respective PhilHealth Regional Offices.

## **11. Are there specific requirements for the Memorandum of Agreement?**

PhilHealth is not prescriptive with regards to the requirements for the MOA but it must be clear for both parties that the agreement should uphold the main goal of the program –

which is to rational use of antimicrobials especially those that are restricted. Essential to this is the assurance of quality in the processes of the laboratory.

**12. Can a hospital that is not ARSP-accredited use restricted antimicrobials?**

- During the transition period, non-ARSP-accredited hospitals may use restricted antimicrobials as long as they have applied for ARSP accreditation and are able to provide the necessary documents during PhilHealth monitoring activities. (Please refer to #9)
- After the transition period (starting July 2019), non-ARSP accredited hospitals shall only use restricted antimicrobials if they have a valid MOA with an ARSP-accredited laboratory.

**13. Will claims for patients given restricted antimicrobials from a hospital that is not ARSP-accredited be denied?**

- No. Claims will not be denied solely because of use of restricted antimicrobials. However, this shall be a monitoring finding and persistent and consistent unauthorized use of restricted antimicrobials can be used during deliberation of the HCP's PhilHealth accreditation renewal.