



US to donate up to 1 M vaccines to Phl

By **CHRISTINA MENDEZ**

The United States has pledged 800,000 to one million doses of either Moderna or AstraZeneca vaccines to the Philippines out of over 80 million doses it is donating to countries worldwide, Ambassador Jose Manuel Romualdez said yesterday.

At a briefing yesterday initiated by Malacañang, Romualdez said the US pledge was different from the 20 million vaccines secured by the Philippine government from Moderna.

"The first batch will be arriving by June 27, that's the first batch. By next month or

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July, that will probably be close to a million then succeeding down the road, up to around November, we will be getting the entire 20 million from Moderna," the ambassador said.

He said the US would draw from its "stockpile which is expected to be given to us by next month."

Reports said the US has shared fewer than 10 million COVID-19 vaccine doses globally despite President Joe Biden's announcement to donate around 80 million by end of the month.

The White House announced that 20 million vaccines would be directed to specific countries while 60 million will go to COVAX.

"So we're getting quite a substantial amount of doses or vaccines coming from the United States aside from what we've already negotiated," he said.

Romualdez also revealed the Philippines has reserved 50 million anti-COVID-19 booster shots being developed by Moderna. "Moderna definitely has already informed us, we reserved 50 million doses - that's for next year," Romualdez said.

Despite Moderna's and Pfizer's established efficacy against new variants especially

the Delta variant, Romualdez said the public should still be given access to booster shots.

He said that like Pfizer, Moderna is expected to be just as effective against the Delta variant since the two vaccines were developed using almost the same technology. Based on clinical trials in the UK, Pfizer was 88 percent effective against the Delta strain.

In a statement, Washington has confirmed its donation of vaccines to the Philippines.

"Today, the Biden-Harris Administration is announcing the distribution list for 55 million of the 80 million doses of America's own vaccine supply President Biden has pledged to allocate by the end of June in service of ending the pandemic globally," the White House said in a statement.

"Earlier this month, the administration announced the plan for the first 25 million doses that we have begun shipping, and today's announcement completes the list for the remaining 55 million doses. For all of these doses, those most at risk, such as health care workers, should be prioritized, based on national vaccine plans," the White House said. - With Pia Lee-Brago, Mayen Jaymalin



Presidential Adviser for Entrepreneurship and Go Negosyo founder Joey Concepcion receives his second dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine. The same vaccine that Go Negosyo's 'A Dose of Hope' program has procured for the private sector and the LGUs, the doses are expected to arrive mid-July and August - about 1.17 million doses each month. Concepcion agrees with OCTA Research that population protection, vaccination at 50 percent, can be achieved by October for NCR Plus and attaining this, like in the case of the United States, can catalyze the further opening of the economy.