

REVIEW

PRIORITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR HEPATITIS B CONTROL IN THE PHILIPPINES AND THE IMPORTANCE OF A VACCINE DOSE AT BIRTH

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Abstract. The Philippines annual birth cohort of over 2 million is the second largest in the Western Pacific Region; 44% of births occur outside health facilities. With third dose infant hepatitis B (HB) vaccine coverage of 43% in 2006, erratic vaccine supply, and lack of policies or processes for universal HB vaccine birth dose delivery, a substantial burden of preventable chronic HB infection continues to occur. Funding, policy, technical and immunization delivery developments now make substantial progress in HB control in the Philippines possible. These developments can help expand access to trained birth care and essential postnatal care for mothers and their newborn.

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