

074 **ASSESSMENT OF THE EXTENT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES FOR WATER SAFETY IN THE PHILIPPINES**

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Background The Philippine National Standards for Drinking Water (PNSDW, 2007) stressed the importance of assuring the quality of drinking water that is delivered to the public. Meanwhile, the World Health Organization recommends application of Water Safety Plans (WSPs) as an effective means of consistently ensuring the safety of a drinking water supply.

Objectives This study assessed the extent of water safety planning among drinking water providers (DWP). It also validated water quality monitoring results of DWPs and assessed compliance with PNSDW 2007.

Methods We purposively selected a total of 183 Levels I, II and III DWPs from 9 regions. We conducted focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs). Additionally, we surveyed Level III DWPs using WHO WSP toolkit. We collected 249 water samples. The samples were analyzed for thirteen of the 14 priority parameters for monitoring drinking water quality. We then compared microbiological, physical and chemical test results against PNSDW 2007 specifications. Laboratory data were triangulated with FGD-, KII-, and WHO WSP toolkit survey-derived data.

Result Ninety-two percent of DWPs have no WSPs. Only 5% implement WSPs. Forty-two percent of the water samples turned out positive for fecal contamination. Eight percent had cadmium, lead or arsenic beyond allowable levels. Thirty-two percent failed in terms of one or more aesthetic parameters.

Conclusion We conclude that the level of development and implementation of WSPs among DWPs in the Philippines is still very low. All Level III DWPs have existing water safety systems and procedures with varying levels of compliance with PNSDW 2007. Inadequate training and budget aggravate the low level of awareness about water safety planning among Levels I and II DWPs. Further, the quality of drinking water in certain areas does not comply with PNSDW 2007.