



Health Financing during COVID-19 responses in Thailand

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Highlights

- Thailand spent 440,023 million baht on healthcare in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020–2022, of which 257,892 million baht went toward COVID-19 tests, treatments, and vaccination services.
- In addition to having higher hospital reserves than in the pre-pandemic period, private hospitals' overall revenue and asset growth rates also increased during the pandemic. These elements suggest that the funding for all hospitals and pertinent organizations was **adequate** to handle the COVID-19 situation.
- Household out-of-pocket payment on medicines and medical supplies increased, while health care utilization (both inpatient and outpatient) decreased, which resulted in decrease of catastrophic health expenditures among the low-income households in this study.
- Although the government attempted to establish a new mechanism for health budget decision making in response to the pandemic, rules and procedures for budget utilization did not differ much from the existing mechanism. This impacts on the budgetary response and resource mobilization during the outbreak.



COVID-19 Situation and the Sequence of Key Events in Thailand (Jan 2020 – Oct 2022)



Source: Authors

Results:

- The main sources of public health financing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic are (1) central budget and (2) government loans according to the Emergency Decree Authorizing the Ministry of Finance to Raise Loans, B.E. 2563 (2020) and B.E. 2564 (2021) for one trillion and 500 billion baht

Thailand's main sources of public health financing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

REGULAR BUDGET



★ Sources of public health finance
Source: Authors

CENTRAL BUDGET

- 1 A list of reserves for emergency or necessary expenses; and
- 2 Expenses to alleviate, resolve and subsidize those affected by the coronavirus outbreak.

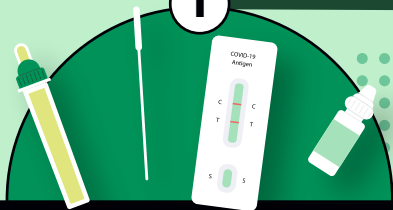
SOCIAL SECURITY FUND

GOVERNMENT LOANS



- Top 3 spending categories are as follows:

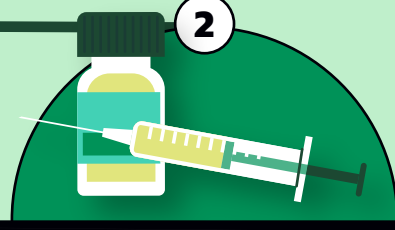
1



COVID-19 related health services

257,892 million baht
or **59%**
of total health expenditures

2



Vaccine procurement and administration

79,902 million baht
or **18%**
of total health expenditures

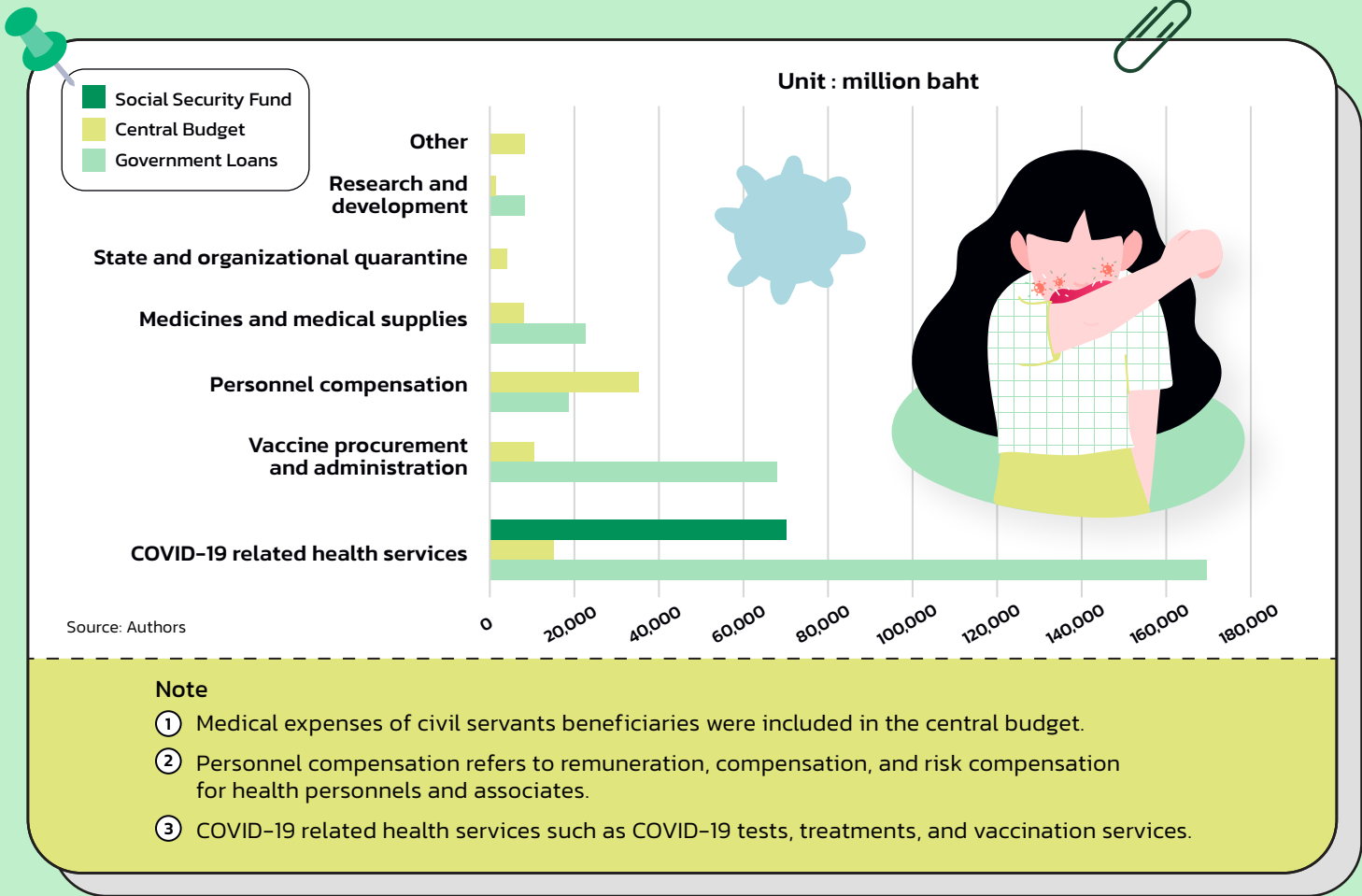
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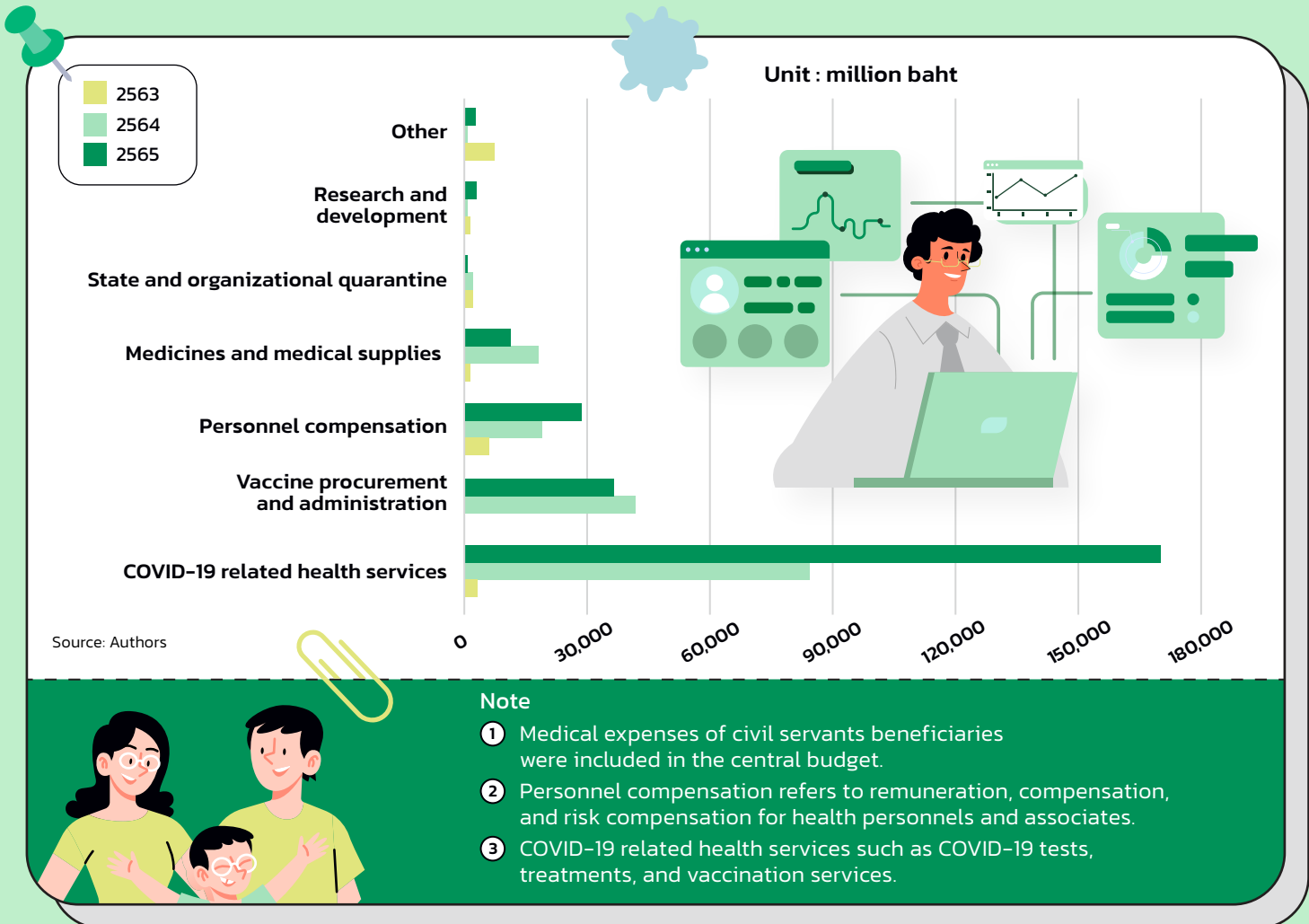
Remuneration, Compensation, and Risk Compensation for Health Personnel and Associates

53,531 million baht
or **12%**
of total health expenditures





● However, if taking budget approval into account, it can be seen that in response to COVID-19, there were more budget approval in 2022 (post pandemic) than in 2020 and 2021, which included a portion of the post-disbursement included health services and compensation.



About this study:

○ This study was a mixed-method research. The scope of the research was divided into 4 main areas: health financing and budget allocation, budget decision-making mechanisms and processes, the impacts of COVID-19 on hospital financial performance and household health expenditures during the COVID-19 outbreak in Thailand from 2020 - 2022. This study utilized document reviews, secondary data analysis, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with stakeholders.



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This policy is part of the research project "Health Financing during COVID-19 responses in Thailand"

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