

## Public Health Services: Makassar Government's response In the Early Phase of the COVID-19

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### Article Info

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**Abstract:** The COVID-19 pandemic has affected many aspects, including public health services. In this situation, the role of the government is needed to continue to strive to fulfill and ensure that health services continue to run well. This study aims to determine the government's response at the beginning of the pandemic phase and to find the inhibiting factors in fulfilling public health services in Makassar. This study also makes it possible to see how the prospects for public health services after the pandemic will be in the future. This study uses documentation data and internet data to collect relevant information. Data analysis uses a qualitative approach by maximizing the use of the Nvivo 12 Plus analysis software. The findings of this study indicate that during the COVID-19 pandemic period, public health services do not only focus on infected patients but also public health services as a whole. This causes services to be less than optimal because medical personnel and infrastructure cannot accommodate the situation. In this situation, aspects still hinder the fulfillment of public health services, including low public awareness, access to information, regulations, and the fulfillment of health facilities. The prospect of health services becomes essential in the future. This requires a more innovative and adaptive national health system.

### INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected human health in many countries, including Indonesia. The World Health Organization (WHO) states that since March 27, 2021, there have been 125,781,957 confirmed positive cases globally (WHO, 2021). The increasing number of cases appears to be a problem experienced by many elemental communities, including the government (Baharuddin et al., 2022; Mustari et al., 2021). COVID-19 then triggered various responses from governments worldwide, both in terms of handling and policies in combating the pandemic (Greer et al., 2020). This situation encourages efforts, especially as a result of overcoming the impact of the problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, in the aspect of fulfilling public health services (Fu et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021; Budd et al., 2020).

COVID-19 is a threat to global health that has been recognized since December 2019 (Chakraborty & Maity, 2020). The infection caused is in the form of clinical symptoms consisting of fever, cough, nasal congestion, fatigue, and other signs of respiratory tract infection (Velavan & Meyer, 2020; Zhou et al., 2020; Sudre et al., 2020). This situation then continues with suggestions to anticipate the spread of the virus by using masks as essential protective equipment, social distancing, or other forms of activity restriction in public spaces (Greenhalgh et al., 2020; Baharuddin, Jubba, et al., 2022). In general, COVID-19 affects many aspects of life, including the health, economy, education, and other socio-political sectors (Prawoto et al., 2020; Aristovnik et al., 2020; Baharuddin, Sairin, et al., 2022).

This situation has influenced the government's work plan to be actively involved in taking a participatory role. The government's involvement is an effort to anticipate the increasing number of cases that are getting bigger and impact many other sectors. The government's role is an aspect that is considered quite dominant in a crisis (Zaremba et al., 2020; Toshkov et al., 2021). The government's presence is an essential response to the COVID-19 pandemic situation in Indonesia to ensure that public services continue to run well, especially public health services. Public health services by the government are also an opportunity to reach the general public; of course, this is supported by collaboration with several other sectors such as hospitals, health practitioners, and medical professionals (Atkins et al., 2019; Gao & Yu, 2020; Lee & Lee, 2021).

So far, many studies on COVID-19 have been carried out, but there are still few research results that relate to the problems and the role of local governments regarding the fulfillment of public health services; plus, there are not many studies that analyze the prospects of public health services after the crisis due to the pandemic. However, at least some trends from previous studies can be mapped. First, the government's performance is slow and not optimal in a pandemic (Pierre, 2020; Joyce, 2021; Aminah et al., 2021). Second, worldwide policy responses aim to reduce and limit the number of transmissions of COVID-19 infections (Bargain & Aminjonov, 2020; García & Cerda, 2020; Stewart, 2021). Third, the government supports public health by calling for national vaccinations, telehealth, telemedicine, and other more adaptive policy approaches (Baharuddin, Sairin, Qodir, et al., 2022; Anthony Jnr, 2021; Bahtiar & Munandar, 2021; Hizbaron et al., 2021).

The purpose of this paper is to try to complement the shortcomings of previous studies by taking an analytical approach by looking at the involvement of local governments in ensuring that public health services continue to run well in a pandemic situation. Based on this, three questions are formulated in this paper: (a) How is the government's response to maximizing public health services in the COVID-19 situation? (b) What are the factors that hinder the government's performance in maximizing public health services? (c) What are the prospects of public health services after the crisis due to the pandemic? From the answers to the three, a way out can be used as material for further evaluation of better service, especially in the aspect of public health.

The reason for choosing the case study in Makassar is because the area is included in South Sulawesi Province, which is categorized as one of the provinces in Indonesia designated as an area with a high rate of spread of COVID-19 based on population data confirmed positive for COVID-19. Data at the beginning of June 2020 shows an increase in positive cases of COVID-19, which has reached more than 100 people in a matter of days. This tendency is the reason for choosing the case study in Makassar to be interesting to explore more deeply to find out how the local government responded in the early days of the pandemic, especially its attachment to public health services. Making Makassar a case study is also an effort to fill the gap left by other researchers or previous researchers who have explored more areas, provinces in Java, or others. Based on this, this study considers that Makassar is quite representative.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive analysis, data obtained from documents, and internet studies. Document and internet studies were chosen because these aspects are sufficient to contain relevant information and allow for further analysis. The data retrieval uses Ncapture (Google Chrome). The analysis tool used also utilizes analysis software, namely Nvivo 12 Plus. The use of Nvivo 12 Plus was chosen because it can code research data and visualize data.



















