

DOH: 13 of 17 patients cleared for A(H1N1)

by VERNADETTE JOVEN
Philstar.com

THIRTEEN out of the 17 patients observed for the A(H1N1) virus have already been cleared by the Department of Health (DOH) and will be discharged anytime soon, a DOH official announced May 8. The DOH has been keeping track of the 17 patients since May 1.

As for the remaining four patients, the DOH said their laboratory results will be received later.

"We will receive the results from the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine later this afternoon and we will officially re-

lease it by once we have consolidated reports from all our units," said DOH Undersecretary Mario Villaverde in a press conference.

He said that the DOH will be able to assess the initial impact of A(H1N1) in the country.

Villaverde explained that an incubation period is required because symptoms may sometimes manifest a few days after the point of contact.

"We advise them to do self-measured quarantine, *ibig sabihin, pakiramdaman din nila ang kanilang sarili at iwasan na muna ang pakikipaghalubilo habang hindi pa tiyak na ligtas na sila sa simptomang ng A(H1N1) virus,*" he continued. ■

DoH issues travel tips vs swine flu

by ANNA VALMERO
Inquirer.net

HEALTH officials urged passengers arriving in the country to help in the fight against the new Influenza A (H1N1) virus by filling up health declaration checklists and reporting flu-like symptoms days after arrival to facilitate quarantine procedures.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III said that all travelers arriving in all local sea and airports have to manifest via a health declaration checklist the countries visited for the past three weeks to determine if they came from areas with swine-flu outbreaks such as Mexico and the United States.

Duque urged travelers to report personally or contact the DoH hotline if they have flu-like symptoms over the past 10 days or after to facilitate their quarantine and treatment if necessary.

Director for National Epidemiology Center Dr. Eric Tayag noted that six of the 10 persons that were quarantined by the Health Department from May 1 to 6 voluntarily submitted themselves for observation

over the next 10 days for possible swine flu infection after they experienced symptoms similar to flu.

Once a person is tested positive for swine flu infection that is only when he must be given Tamiflu medication—an intake of two 75 mg capsules daily, over five days.

Duque outlined the procedures for travelers:

1. Upon arrival, a traveler must proceed to a quarantine counter for screening, fill up and submit accomplished health declaration checklist forms, and pass through a thermal scanner to detect fever.

If a person has no fever, he can go home or his destination but must observe and report to health authorities if he has flu-like symptoms for the next 10 days.

2. If upon arrival a person has fever, he must go to an attending physician for further screening to confirm temperature and review travel history.

If a person is negative for fever as diagnosed by the physician, he can go home

or to his area of destination. He still has to observe and report to health authorities if he has flu-like symptoms for the next 10 days.

3. If the person is considered case under investigation, he will be referred to a hospital such as Research Institute for Tropical Medicine or San Vicente Hospital for quarantine and/or treatment.

Touching or holding an object previously touched by an infected person and placing your hand to the nose is also another way of disease transmission because the virus affects the aerial passages of the body, said Duque.

Personal hygiene—including proper hand washing before eating and covering up the mouth with tissue when sneezing or coughing—is still the simplest way of disease prevention, said Duque.

The World Health Organization said on its website that as of Wednesday, May 6, 22 countries have officially reported 1516 cases of influenza A (H1N1) infection. ■

CONTRARY TO REPORTS

Filipino nurses still welcome to work in NZ

FILIPINO nurses are still welcome in New Zealand, executives of the New Zealand Nursing Council told the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Association of Deans of Philippine Colleges of Nursing.

The DFA, which met with the Council's chief executive Carolyn Reed and registration manager Andrea McCance, on Thursday, May 7 said the assurance was made following some media reports that New Zealand is questioning the competence of Filipino nurses.

In a statement, the DFA said the executives also expressed regret about the report, which Reed said were based on remarks made by those not connected with either the Council or the New Zealand government.

Council officials, who also met separately with officials of the Professional Regulation Commission and the Commission on Higher Education, said Filipino nurse candidates to their country are able to hurdle the prescribed bridging program.

They also cited the "very low" failure rate in the required competency assessment program.

McCance said her office has been trying to simplify the process for qualified foreign nurses to work in New Zealand. Among the steps they have taken are: provide more complete information on its website and allow staggered completion of required International English Language Testing System, which may also be taken here in the Philippines.

Council officials also said the issuance of residency visas is beyond the scope of their work. They said a foreign nurse

registered with the Council should present such registration in support of a separate proper residency status application with New Zealand immigration authorities.

They said the Council also encourages direct applications rather than courting registration through recruitment agencies.

The DFA encouraged the Philippine Nurses Association and the Association of Deans of Philippine Colleges of Nursing to have school registrars identify and match subjects with foreign government requirements on the applicant's transcript of records.

The department said this would facilitate the evaluation of individuals who will practice nursing in New Zealand.

Those who met with the New Zealand officials were DFA Asian and Pacific Affairs director J. Susana Paez and Office of the Undersecretary for International Economic Relations director Eric Gerardo Tamayo, as well as Dr. Teresita Barcelo, president of the Philippine Colleges of Nursing.

Philippine Ambassador to New Zealand Bienvenido Tejano suggested the visit in response to the Council's expression of desire to undertake consultations with their Filipino counterparts.

Filipinos comprise the second largest number of foreign nurses in New Zealand, with about 200 nurses registered every year. (Inquirer.net)



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