

# GMA happy to hear 10-year-girl with A(H1N1) flu has recovered—Remonde

**P**RESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and other Malacañang officials on Friday, May 22 rejoiced over reports that the 10-year-old girl suspected of acquiring influenza A(H1N1) from the United States last May 18 “no longer has fever and is recovering well.”

“As you all know, our country has finally come out with its first recorded case of the A(H1N1) flu virus, commonly known as swine flu. I am happy to report that the

patient has already recovered and is now completely healthy,” said Press Secretary Cerge Remonde during a daily briefing at Malacañang’s New Executive Building (NEB).

Also with Remonde in the briefing were Cabinet Secretary Silvestre Bello III, Deputy Presidential Spokesman for Economic Affairs Gary Olivar and Health Undersecretary Mario Villaverde.

Remonde said the Department

of Health (DOH) is already in the process of retracing the girl’s tracks in order to identify and contain the possible path of infection.

The Press Secretary reminded the public that the government has put in place a “comprehensive range of immigration precautions and public health measures to protect our country against this possible new medical crisis.”

“These measures stood us in good stead and helped to delay the spread of the disease to our shores until the very last moment. Unfortunately, the global village is getting smaller everyday, and so it was just a matter of time before the virus caught up with us,” Remonde said.

“Now that it is here, we must become even more vigilant and continue to observe common sense precautions to avoid catching the disease or spreading it to

others,” he added.

Other Malacañang officials present at the briefing also said the June 1, 2009 opening of classes in the public and private elementary and secondary schools nationwide will go on as scheduled. The opening of classes in the collegiate and postgraduate levels will start June 8.

“At this point, we believe that public health considerations will still allow us to proceed with the opening of the new school year on schedule,” Remonde said.

Villaverde also said there is no need to postpone classes since there is still no community outbreak in the Philippines.

President Arroyo has reiterated her earlier instructions to the DOH, Bureau of Immigration and other agencies concerned to stay on top of this issue and keep her always updated, according to Remonde.

“Let us continue with our ev-

eryday affairs, remaining vigilant of course, but nonetheless reassured that the national leadership continues to look out for the public health and the community’s welfare,” Remonde said.

Meanwhile, Villaverde announced that the girl’s mother, the person who has been in close contact with the girl, has tested negative for H1N1. The girl, however, is still suffering from sore throat.

Villaverde told Malacañang reporters that they have obtained the manifest of the flight taken by the girl. Passengers who were seated around six feet or three rows in front, beside, and at the back of the girl have been identified.

“These 17 passengers who sat closest to the girl are being traced so they can be notified and told to be vigilant about their health condition. These people should immediately inform health au-

thorities if they develop flu-like symptoms so they can be quarantined,” Villaverde said.

He said the DOH would be studying how virulent the virus is in the Philippines, adding the virus appears to have been “limited to one household.”

As observed in the US, Canada, and Mexico, Villaverde said that as more confirmed H1N1 cases are being reported, the fatality rate is declining. He noted that the virus is turning out to be just like seasonal flu.

Villaverde also said the country now has one million doses of oseltamivir, the medicine used to treat such flu cases. Half a million more doses will be donated to the Philippines. “These 1.5 million doses will be good for 150,000 people,” he said.

The health official advised the public against self-medication since they might develop resistance from the drug. (PNA)

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— Robert F. Andrea

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“Let us continue with our ev-

## Travelers to RP advised of H1N1 virus entry

**T**HE Department of Tourism on Friday, May 22 ordered its offices around the world to inform prospective foreign travelers to the Philippines that the influenza A (H1N1) virus has entered the country as confirmed by the Department of Health.

Tourism Secretary Ace Durano said he also asked the department’s partner travel agencies abroad to issue similar travel advisories to foreign tourists who plan to visit the country.

“The travel advisories should be accurate so the foreigners would be advised properly,” he said at the

opening of the tourism department’s two-day job fair in Pasay City.

Durano said the report on the Philippines’ first case of A(H1N1) flu infection won’t affect the influx of tourists in the country “as long as we make it clear that there is no pandemic of swine flu here.” (Inquirer.net)

## DoT urges 10-day flu monitoring for travelers

by KRISTINE L. ALAVE  
Inquirer.net

**W**ITH the announcement that the Influenza A (H1N1) virus has entered the Philippines, the Department of Tourism urged tourists and other travelers on Friday to monitor themselves for flu symptoms for 10 days after arriving in the country.


At the same time, the department said it would not issue travel restrictions in the wake of the health department’s disclosure that a 10-year-old girl who had returned from the United States had the potentially deadly virus.

In a statement released Friday, May 22, the department assured the public that entry and exit points were being strictly monitored.

“Apart from strict surveillance, the government has likewise required travelers to monitor

themselves within 10 days after arrival from for any flu-like symptoms,” the department said.

It also noted that regional tourism offices were on alert for any case of flu involving incoming tourists. ■

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