

DATELINE PHILIPPINES

5 under observation for swine flu—DOH chief

by DONA PAZZIBUGAN & ANNA VALMERO
Inquirer.net

FIVE people have been placed under observation from May 1 to 6 for possible swine flu, Health Secretary Francisco Duque said last May 6.

Two of the five are Filipinos—one a 32-year-old male who came from Ireland, one of several countries infected by swine flue and another, a 29-year-old male who came from the US.

The two have been quarantined at the San Vicente Center in Cebu and at the San Lazaro Hospital in Manila.

The other three are foreigners—one a 26-year-old female who came from the United Kingdom and has been confined in San Vicente; and the two, 12-year-old and nine-year-old boys who came from South Korea.

"We'll know the results [of the tests] within 24 to 48 hours," Duque announced in a news conference last May 6.

"There's no reason to panic. What's important is we understand what government is doing and the steps we are taking" to prevent an outbreak here, he said.

Since May 1, the Department of Health (DoH) has had 10 cases under observation but five of them tested negative for the A H1N1 flu virus which according to the World Health Organization could cause a flu pandemic.

Duque said placing people under observation meant that they were suspected but not necessarily infected with the swine flu virus and would need to be quarantined for a period of time.

The DoH is planning to increase its Tamiflu stock pile from 700,000 capsules to one million over the next week, he said.

At present, the DoH, private drug companies, and the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) have a combined total of 1.17 million capsules. ■

PGMA returns from successful visits to Egypt, Syria

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo returned morning of May 6 from a successful five-day working visit to Egypt and state visit to Syria to forge stronger relations with the two countries, make progress on the Mindanao peace process and look for the welfare and interest of the overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).

The President and her official delegation emerged from the arrival gate of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 2 shortly after 7am.

She was welcomed by First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr., Philippine National Police chief Director General Jesus Verzosa, Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff Lt. Gen. Victor Ibrado, Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan and Manila International Airport Authority General Manager Alfonso Cusi.

Just like all regular passengers, the President went through the airport's thermal scanner and underwent a footbath, one of the precautionary measures to check for A/H1N1 flu virus.

Likewise, the Chief Executive filled up the medical form which

is part of the airport's standard procedures to prevent the entry of the influenza virus into the country.

From the NAIA, the President headed straight to Malacanang to attend to her whole-day activities.

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde, who was among those in the official delegation, described the President's special working trip to Egypt and state visit to Syria as "successful and very productive."

Remonde said the Chief Executive managed to get the full support of Egypt and Syria, two of the most influential nations in the Arab World, in the Philippines' bid for observer status in the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) which is a very important factor in achieving lasting peace in Mindanao.

Likewise, the President brought



President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

home vital potential investments following her meeting with Saudi Arabia's second richest man, Sheik Nasser Kharaffi in Cairo, who expressed interest to invest some \$ 1.2 billion in further developing the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport (DMIA) at the Clark Freeport Zone in Pampanga.

Remonde said a welfare center will be established in Egypt in line with the President's pursuit to further promote the welfare of the OFWs.

He also that the Philippines and Syria forged three agreements on the establishment of bilateral

consultations, cultural cooperation, and visa exemption for nationals of the countries holding official and diplomatic passports.

Remonde added that the President also met with members of the Filipino community and assured them of her government's efforts to address their plight in the midst of the global economic crisis.

"It was a very successful trip where the President managed to get trade and investment potentials, promote the welfare of the OFWs and make progress on achieving peace in Mindanao," the Press Secretary said. (PNA)

Cory to undergo further chemo

by AUREA CALICA
Philstar.com

FORMER President Corazon Aquino will still undergo further chemotherapy after her successful laparoscopic surgery last May 6 that removed a cancerous tumor from her colon.

Aquino's son Sen. Benigno Aquino III told reporters that the whole family is happy that the operation turned out fine and that the former president was doing very well.

However, he said doctors must make sure the cancer would be fully contained and the chemotherapy sessions would continue.

He said the practice before was to operate on cancer patients first before chemotherapy. But now it

would have to be chemotherapy first to stop the cancer cells' growth, like what was done to his mother.

"Sometimes the patient gets cured already and then there is no more need for surgery," he said.

He said his mother would have to fully recover from the operation before she would resume chemotherapy.

The senator said what his mother was undergoing was a regimen for cancer patients and that they were hopeful she would get healed completely.

He disclosed that his mother was not complaining after the surgery except that she got a little dehydrated because she could not take water after surgery. ■

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