

## 2 Pinoys, 3 foreigners under observation for swine flu

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who came from the United Kingdom—are confined at the Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center (VSMCC) in Cebu.

The others who were quarantined are a 12-year-old girl and a nine-year-old from South Korea who have been brought to the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM) in Muntinlupa, and a 29-year-old Filipino from the United States who is being observed at San Lazaro Hospital in Manila.

One of the foreigners had developed a cough and fever.

The swab samples collected from the patients' throats are being examined at the RITM to determine if they are have been infected with A(H1N1).

Meanwhile, the results of tests conducted on the patients confined in the VSMCC in Cebu will be out on May 9, DOH Emergency Management Coordinator Dr. Expedito Medalla said.

Medalla said the case of the woman foreigner is improving and her cough was already gone but she will still be isolated until the results come out from the RITM on May 9.

The male Filipino patient, on the other hand, is still under close monitoring due to his recurrent fever, Medalla said.

According to Duque, five persons had earlier been suspected to have A(H1N1) infection but eventually tested negative for the virus.

These individuals have a "history of travel" to Switzerland, the US, Ireland, Canada and Italy. They also manifested fever.

"Ten cases were under observation since May 1... Four of them were Filipinos while the rest were foreigners. Their ages ranged from nine to 80 years old, and seven of them were males while three were females," he added.

Duque said that in case any of

the five "pending" cases turns out positive for A(H1N1), the DOH will send their samples to Australia, Japan or to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta for verification.

But when the DOH gets the CDC's primer on how to compare A(H1N1) with other influenza viruses, the country will no longer have to send samples abroad.

This as Duque announced that he will attend the Special ASEAN Health Ministers' Meeting on A(H1N1) in Thailand which will be attended by health officials from Japan, South Korea and China.

The health ministers are expected to come up with a resolution that will be presented during the World Health Assembly in Geneva on May 18 to 27.

The DOH advised those who suspect they have the virus or are feeling the symptoms to contact the Operation Center-Health Emergency Management Service at the following numbers: 711-1001, 711-1002, 0915-772-5621 and 0921-592-2361 and National Epidemiology Center-DOH at 743-1937.

**170,000 Filipinos to die in case of outbreak**

The feared A(H1N1) virus could kill up to 170,000 Filipinos in case of an outbreak in the country, Rep. Walden Bello of the party-list group Akbayan said on Tuesday May 7.

"According to Dr. Eric Tayag, head of the National Epidemiology Center of the DOH, if the virus spreads in the Philippines, a realistic estimate is that infections could reach 1.7 million and deaths would come to 170,000," he told his colleagues.

Tayag briefed the committee on health of the House of Representatives on the measures the DOH is taking to prevent an outbreak. He was asked about a worst-case scenario. (Philstar.com)

## US celebrates Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

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observe this month with appropriate programs and activities."

"As the 111th Congress passes the 100-day mark of legislative business, I reflect on the contributions we have been able to give back to the AAPI community. In February, Congress passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to turn around our economy and create millions of jobs," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said in a statement. "Within this legislation, funds were allocated to compensate World War II Filipino War veterans, who were never officially recognized for their service more than 60 years ago in the Pacific Theater."

Pelosi said that she was happy to reflect on the accomplishments and influence of Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) across the nation.

"This long-awaited formal acknowledgment of brave veterans who fought along side American soldiers to defend American's cause during World War II. I have long advocated for and am thrilled to see it passed into law and signed by President Obama," Pelosi remarked.

In New York City, the A/PA Heritage Month is considered as the community's cherished springtime ritual of renewal.

"Today, at the foothills of the United Nations, at the lush respite of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, we pay special attention to our rich Asian American traditions and celebrate our heritage, which represents our valued legacy from the past, a living record of how we live today, and what we can build now to pass on to future generations," officials of the CAPA said in a statement.

The annual heritage festival, which is now on its 30th year is one of the more famous public events in the city which promotes dialogue and engagement among the Asian American community and its treasured neighbors

In 1978, a joint congressional resolution established Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week. The first 10 days of May were chosen to coincide with two important milestones in Asian/Pacific American history: the arrival in the United States of the first Japanese immigrants (May 7, 1843) and contributions of Chinese workers to the building of the transcontinental railroad, completed on May 10, 1869.

In 1992, Congress expanded the observance to a monthlong celebration. According to a 1997 Office of Management and Budget directive, the Asian or Pacific Islander racial category was separated into two categories: one being Asian and the other Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.

Kick-off celebrations were also held in San Francisco at the Herbst

Theatre and in Los Angeles, where Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa honored members of the APA community who have contributed to the growth of the city.

The Los Angeles ceremony featured an eclectic array of art, music and food, representing the Asian Pacific Islanders' diversity. Fil-Am actress Tia Carrere, and Daniel Ho, Grammy award-winning artists, who had collaborated on two Hawaiian albums, performed at the program at the South Lawn of City Hall, which was hosted by ABC-7 health specialist and reporter Denise Dador.

The Library of Congress is also celebrating during the month of May with several events, a display and a web presentation.

With a theme of "Lighting the Past, Present and Future" these events are free and open to the public. Among the events scheduled is a discussion with author Svetlana Kim, who will talk about her new book, "White Pearl and I: A Memoir of a Political Refugee." Kim, who arrived in New York in 1991, was inducted into the Asian Academy Hall of Fame in 2008. She shares this honor with former US Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao and former Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta.

Later this month, a program titled "Who Is Babysitting Whom?" will be held in the Pickford Theater and will explore the Asian tradition of respect for elders. It will feature a 22-minute film titled "I Wanna Babysit Lola," with special guest, centenarian Remy Cabacungun; and a display of multigenerational family photos from the Library of Congress Asian American Association.

In her statement, Speaker Pelosi also paid tribute to Asian American leaders who are leading the way in the community.

"Leadership in this country is also drawing from the AAPI community and gathering the best minds and forces to guide them. With President Obama's appointments to his Cabinet of Secretary Steven Chu to the Energy Department, Secretary Eric Shinseki to the Veterans Affairs Department, and Secretary Gary Locke to the Commerce Department, we now have represented AAPIs as key decision-makers. Their heritage will add a key dimension in America's history of leaders and how they shaped this country," Pelosi said.

According to the Census, there is an estimated 15.2 million US residents in July 2007 who said they were Asian alone or Asian in combination with one or more other races. This group comprised about 5 percent of the total population.

Chinese-Americans are still the largest Asian group at 3.54 million, followed by Filipinos (3.05 million), Asian Indians (2.77 million), Vietnamese (1.64 million), Koreans (1.56 million) and Japanese (1.22 million). (Momar G. Visaya)

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