

DOH deploys teams vs diseases

by SHEILA CRISOSTOMO
PHILSTAR.COM

MANILA—The Department of Health (DOH) started yesterday the monitoring of the spread of athlete's foot among residents in flooded areas that could trigger an outbreak of leptospirosis in communities recently ravaged by tropical storm "Ondoy" and typhoon "Pepeng."

DOH chief epidemiologist Dr. Eric Tayag said health teams were deployed to conduct medical missions in evacuation centers in Metro Manila.

Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog following reports that many evacuees were already suffering from athlete's foot due to constant wading in floodwaters.

"Of the more than 30,000 consultations that they have attended to, 19 percent involved athlete's foot. This cannot be ignored because athlete's foot is an open wound and the leptospira bacteria can enter the body through

open wounds or cuts," he told The STAR.

Tayag said that if possible, wading through floodwaters should be avoided.

"Draining floods should now be our priority. If we can't help wading in floodwaters, when you step out of the flood, you have to wash your feet with clean water. And then dry them thoroughly, especially between the toes."

Athlete's foot is an infection of the feet caused by fungus known as tinea that thrive in warm and moist areas. It is contagious, and can be passed through direct contact, or contact with items such as shoes, socks, or stockings.

It is characterized by cracked, flaking, peeling skin between the toes. The affected area is usually red and itchy.

The DOH had already distributed anti-fungal ointment during its medical missions.

Tayag claimed that there is a traditional but effective way to

cure athlete's foot.

He added that feet with athlete's foot could be wiped with pure vinegar or washed with lukewarm water with vinegar.

The DOH is also expecting an upsurge in dengue cases next week when the larvae that were bred in floodwaters grow into mosquitoes and when the dengue symptoms start manifesting.

The expert said that as of "pre-Ondoy" Sept. 12, there was a total of 31,195 dengue cases in the country. This is 9.6 percent lower compared to the 34,492 cases registered during the same period in 2008.

Dengue is transmitted by the bites of infected Aedes Aegypti, the mosquito species characterized by white stripes on the legs that bite during the day.

Leesuy said experts from the DOH's regional offices would apply the larvacide, a type of insecticide that kills mosquitoes but is safe for humans and other

animals.

"This will be applied in clean but stagnant water, not in floodwaters that are usually running," he added.

Leesuy has urged the public to embark on massive clean-up operations around their residence to eliminate possible breeding sites of mosquitoes.

Leptospirosis cases rise
The DOH had earlier warned residents of flooded areas on the increase in cases of leptospirosis from nine private and government hospitals in Metro Manila after Ondoy and Pepeng hit the country.

DOH recorded 383 leptospirosis cases from the East Avenue Medical Center (69 cases), Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center (1), Manila Doctor's Hospital (10), The Medical City (70), National Kidney and Transplant Institute (28), Quirino Memorial Medical Center (18), Philippine General Hospital (17), Rizal Medical Center (13), and the San Lazaro Hospital (157) as of Oct. 12.

"This is cause for concern since this surge in cases being reported by only nine Metro Manila hospitals already represents about half of last year's annual figures when we reported 769 total cases," Duque said.

Escudero suspends talk on 2010 plans

by CHRISTINE AVENDAÑO
INQUIRER.NET



But Escudero said his political plans for 2010 had become even more firmed up after he saw what was wrong and outdated in the country's calamity response.

Escudero is expected to be the standard bearer of the Nationalist People's Coalition.

Sen. Chiz Escudero

Asked whether a team-up between him and Sen. Loren Legarda was still possible, Escudero said he did not see any reason why that could not happen but he asked reporters not to make him discuss election team-ups for now.

He also said he was thinking of pulling out his infomercials in television because of the calamity. Legarda declined to talk about politics or her possible team-up with Escudero.

Arroyo picks Muslim politician as peace adviser

by JOCELYN UY
INQUIRER.NET

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has appointed a Muslim politician as her adviser on peace following the resignation of Avelino Razon Jr. who is planning to run for mayor of Manila.

Undersecretary Nabil Tan, a native of Sulu and a lawyer, assumed last Oct. 12 the post of officer in charge of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP).

Tan vowed to restart the stalled peace talks not only between the government and Moro secessionists but also between the government and communist rebels.

"All these efforts, of course, should be done in the context of people-centered peace process work, of sharing responsibilities, of hard work, and of synergy among the various offices and units," Tan, a former vice governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, said in a statement.

Tan served as OPPAP undersecretary for five years starting in 1997. He also worked with

a nongovernment organization for two years before returning to OPPAP in 2006.

He is concurrent chair of the

government peace panel negotiating with the Rebolusyong Partido ng Manggagawang Mindanao.

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