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GOVERNMENT OFFERS FULL SUPPORT IN QUARANTINE, ISOLATION FACILITIES

Press Release/13 May 2020

With the incoming easing and lifting of community quarantines across the nation, the government has been bolstering its testing, isolation, and quarantine facilities to prevent overwhelming the healthcare system when a possible spike in infection occurs.

In today's Beat COVID-19 Virtual Presser, Health Undersecretary Dr. Maria Rosario Singh-Vergeire discussed with Bases Conversion and Development Authority President and CEO Vince Dizon how the government is improving the country's isolation measures as part of its national response against COVID-19.

"Itong virus na ito ay bagong-bago, unang-una wala siyang bakuna, at kung hindi tayo mag-iingat madali tayong mahahawa. Mabilis lumipat from one person to another," said Dizon, who is also the Deputy Chief Implementer of the National Action Plan Against COVID-19.

"At pag nalaman po natin kung sino ang positibo dito sa virus na ito ay kailangan po natin silang i-isolate, kailangan po natin silang ihiwalay kahit na po ito'y mahirap at ito po'y masakit sa loob dahil ayaw natin mahiwalay sa ating mga kamag-anak," he added.

Quarantine facilities are designed to make sure potential COVID-19 carriers are kept separate from the public until they complete the mandatory 14-day quarantine period and be cleared to return home.

There are currently four "mega swabbing centers" located in Philippine Sports Stadium inside the Philippine Arena (northern sector), Mall of Asia Arena in Pasay City (southern sector), Enderun Tent in Taguig City (eastern sector), and Palacio de Maynila Tent in Roxas Boulevard (western sector).

On the other hand, isolation facilities are designated for probable, suspect, and confirmed cases. These facilities are located in large areas, similar to Ninoy Aquino Stadium and the World Trade Center, and provide essential healthcare services to recovering Filipinos.

"Para sa mga may edad, maysakit, deadly po ang sakit na ito. Hindi po ito gawang biro. So kailangang i-isolate natin ang mga kababayan para hindi sila makahawa," said Dizon.

Both kinds of facilities provide separate rooms for occupants with free food, air-conditioning, wifi, and 24-hour medical supervision.

"Kahit may testing, hindi natin agad nalalaman kung ang isang tao ay infected ba ng virus dahil mayroong turnaround time ang resulta. Ibig sabihin nangangailangan ito ng kaunting panahon bago natin malaman kung positive o negative ba tayo," said Singh-Vergeire. "Sa mga panahong ito po pumapasok ang kahalagahan ng isolation."

COVIDKAYA to help improve data integrity

Stef Sy, the CEO of the Department of Health's (DOH) data analytics corporate partner Thinking Machines Data Science, announced the recent launch of COVIDKAYA, an application developed in collaboration with the World Health Organization and the Department of Information and Communication Technology to improve the nation's surveillance of the virus.

Through automation of the collection of case data, the app will help minimize encoding errors when data is sent directly to the DOH. Shifting from manual input to digitized forms coupled with data centralization from DOH will help reduce errors and build a clearer picture of the pandemic situation.

"It really takes months to build and test a data system properly," said Sy, noting that they reached 99% reliability with the current system and hope to bring it 99.9% to equip the Government with a useful data set for policy and decision making.