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DOH CLEARS BACKLOG FROM 27 LABS, URGES 14 REMAINING LABORATORIES TO SUBMIT COMPLETE LINE LISTS

Press Release / 31 May 2020

The Department of Health (DOH) Epidemiology Bureau (EB) announced that it has cleared all the backlog cases for validation based on the complete line lists submitted by twenty seven (27) operational licensed laboratories and the partial line list submitted by one (1) licensed laboratory, out of the forty-two (42) that are currently in operation.

Since 28 May, DOH reformatted its case bulletin to indicate which of the newly validated cases are recent or “fresh” cases--referring to cases whose lab results were released within the last three (3) days of the date of reporting--and which are “late” cases, referring to cases with results released four (4) days or more behind the date of reporting, but just recently validated due to delayed submissions from the laboratories.

The surge of “late” cases is attributed to the EB’s aggressive validation of recently-submitted line lists. Each line list contains all test results conducted since the beginning of the laboratory’s operation. The validation process eliminates possible duplication in recording of cases while also ensuring that all test results have been transmitted to DOH. The DOH has clarified, however, that the increasing numbers do not mean that the COVID-19 situation in the country is worsening.

While the clearing of backlog cases for validation is a welcome development, the Health Department has called on the remaining 14 of the 42 operational laboratories (as of 31 May 2020) to submit their respective complete line lists in order for the DOH Epidemiology Bureau to immediately validate and include into the official count. Starting June 1, no more late cases will be reported until the remaining operational laboratories submit their complete line lists.

“We urge the 14 remaining operational laboratories who have yet to submit their complete line lists to coordinate with DOH and submit immediately. These line lists are necessary for the government to provide accurate and timely information not only to our policy-makers, but also to the public who have endured the hardships brought on by this pandemic. Our people deserve to know,” Health Secretary Francisco T. Duque III appealed.

As for the fresh cases, the DOH expects all laboratories to send the daily accomplishment reports of all tests completed for the day which will be reported the following day. DOH also noted that the status of submission of the daily reports shall be made available to the public. These reports will provide an accurate picture of the progress of cases as the country adjusts to the General Community Quarantine.