



Republic of the Philippines  
Department of Health  
**OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

February 5, 2020

**DEPARTMENT CIRCULAR**

No. 2020 - 0040

**TO: ALL UNDERSECRETARIES AND ASSISTANT SECRETARIES; DIRECTORS OF BUREAUS AND CENTERS FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT; MINISTER OF HEALTH – BANGSAMORO AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO); EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS OF SPECIALTY HOSPITALS, NATIONAL NUTRITION COUNCIL; CHIEFS OF MEDICAL CENTERS, HOSPITALS, SANITARIA AND INSTITUTES; PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION; DIRECTORS OF PHILIPPINE NATIONAL AIDS COUNCIL AND TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION CENTERS AND OTHERS CONCERNED**

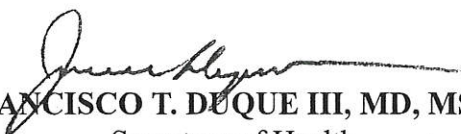
**SUBJECT: Reiteration of the Interim Guidelines on Repatriation of Overseas Filipinos due to 2019-nCoV ARD**

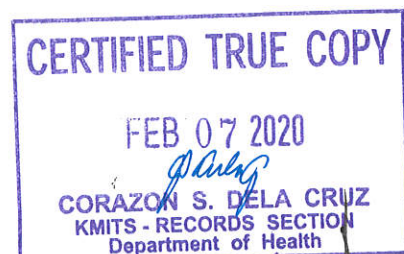
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The Department of Health reiterates Department Memorandum No. 2020-0063 entitled “Interim Guidelines on Repatriation of Overseas Filipinos due to 2019-nCoV ARD” particularly the guidelines and procedures on the repatriation of Overseas Filipinos (OFs) from China.

This is to provide guidance to all partners and stakeholders to take the necessary steps to address the ongoing 2019-nCoV Acute Respiratory Disease (ARD) situation.

Dissemination of the information to all concerned is requested.

  
**FRANCISCO T. DE QUE III, MD, MSc**  
Secretary of Health





Republic of the Philippines  
Department of Health  
**OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

February 3, 2020

**DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM**  
No. 2020 - 0063

**TO: ALL UNDERSECRETARIES AND ASSISTANT SECRETARIES; DIRECTORS OF BUREAUS AND CENTERS FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT; MINISTER OF HEALTH – BANGSAMORO AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO; EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS OF SPECIALTY HOSPITALS AND NATIONAL NUTRITION COUNCIL; CHIEFS OF MEDICAL CENTERS, HOSPITALS, SANITARIA AND INSTITUTES; PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION; DIRECTORS OF PHILIPPINE NATIONAL AIDS COUNCIL AND TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION CENTERS AND OTHERS CONCERNED**

**SUBJECT: Interim Guidelines on the Repatriation of Overseas Filipinos due to 2019-nCoV ARD**

## **I. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE**

After a cluster of pneumonia cases of unknown etiology was reported in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China last December 31, 2019, Chinese health authorities preliminarily identified the cause of this viral pneumonia as a new or novel type of coronavirus (2019-nCoV).

With an increasing number of cases spreading to various territories and confirmed human-to-human transmission, the World Health Organization declared the outbreak as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) last January 30, 2020.

The Department of Health (DOH) hereby issues these interim guidelines to ensure the safe and secure repatriation of OFs and to mitigate the potential health risks due to possible exposure to 2019-nCoV Acute Respiratory Disease (ARD) of Filipinos in China. These guidelines are aligned with the Joint Memorandum Circular No. 2017-0001 on the Integrated Policy Guidelines and Procedures in the Implementation of the Inter-Agency Medical Repatriation Assistance Program for OFs.

## **II. GENERAL GUIDELINES**

- A. Repatriation shall be conducted in close coordination with the health authorities in China. Only OFs with public health clearance and are asymptomatic prior to boarding as assessed by the Philippine Health Emergency Response Team (HERT) assisted by the airline crew will be repatriated.

**CERTIFIED TRUE COPY**

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MARIA CRIVELLO  
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- B. OFs shall sign a Consent Form stating their willingness to undergo the mandatory quarantine period and daily checking of vital signs upon return to the country. Other pertinent medical procedures shall be required based on the results of daily assessment.
- C. During travel, repatriates shall be accompanied by the Philippine HERT together with the Aviation Doctor to conduct in-flight assessment and reassessment. All members of the HERT to be deployed shall be provided orientation on aviation protocol based on International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).
- D. Arrangements for the arrival of the repatriates and the members of HERT, shall be made in compliance with the Philippine security and safety regulations, as well as Customs, Immigration and Quarantine (CIQ) protocols.
- E. All repatriates including the accompanying HERT shall undergo mandatory quarantine of not less than fourteen (14) days, in accordance with existing rules and regulations.
- F. Transportation facilities, as arranged by the airline handler, in coordination with Bureau of Quarantine (BOQ), shall ensure the privacy, ease of access, and rapid transfer of the repatriates from the point of origin to the holding facility.
- G. Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) protocols shall be observed at all times from the point of embarkation (i.e. China) to disembarkation (i.e. Clark Airport, Philippines) and inside the holding facility
- H. Routine care and case management for non-infectious conditions within the holding facility shall be in accordance with clinical practice guidelines.
- I. Mental Health and Psychosocial Services (MHPSS) shall be provided to the repatriates and members of the HERT.
- J. Provisions of the existing DOH issuances on team mobilization shall govern the deployment procedures of HERTs.

### III. SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

#### A. Departure Protocols

- 1. All potential repatriates shall undergo pre-departure counselling and briefing prior endorsement to Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA).
- 2. Proper referral and endorsement shall be done by the DFA to the BOQ following the submission of repatriate's information and documents.
- 3. Arrangement for repatriation shall consider compliance to China's protocol/s in the issuance of public health clearance. In the event that a public health clearance is not issued to a repatriate, a notification from the health authorities in China to repatriates with signs and symptoms must be secured.
- 4. All repatriates shall undergo Pre-Boarding Thermal Scanning. Those with fever and/or cough shall not be allowed to board.
- 5. All passengers shall be accounted for and provided with passenger's locator card/health declaration checklist and collected in flight.
- 6. Aircraft shall be required to be equipped with adequate Standard Precaution Kits.
- 7. All handlers shall ensure that notification of arrival and pre-arrangement on the use of an accessible and secured disembarkation area with limited media entry in the airport shall be attended to.
- 8. Arrangement for land transport shall be made from the point of disembarkation, preferably a highly tinted service vehicle with travel time between 10 PM to 4 AM to shorten contact and transit time.



9. The Philippine Repatriation Team, upon ensuring that all repatriates are onboard the aircraft, shall board the aircraft for immediate departure.

**B. In-Flight Protocols**

1. All repatriates, cabin crew and other staff of the aircraft shall observe standard precautions, including hand and respiratory hygiene.
2. Cabin crew shall ensure safe and sanitary handling and distribution procedures for consumable products and other items.
3. The pilot-in-command of the aircraft shall ensure that any passenger who developed fever and/or respiratory illness is reported promptly to air traffic control, in order to facilitate provision for the presence of any special medical personnel and equipment necessary for the management of public health risks on arrival.
4. The passenger who developed fever and/or respiratory illness shall be relocated away from other passengers, if possible, and shall be attended by cabin crew.

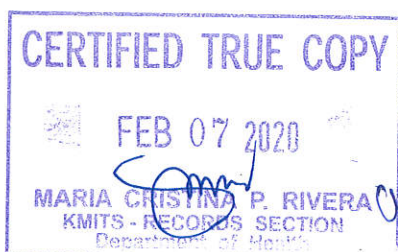
**C. Arrival Protocols**

1. Arrival of the repatriates shall be coordinated with Clark International Airport.
2. A Quarantine Medical Officer shall perform an initial examination and screening of the OFs using a thermal camera prior to the repatriates' disembarkation from the plane. The Decision Tool for the 2019 n-CoV Assessment for BOQ and Hospitals shall be used in classifying cases.
3. Any repatriate who developed signs and symptoms in transit based on case definition shall be brought to the nearest referral hospital via an ambulance of the BOQ or the receiving hospital for testing and definitive case management.
4. Immigration and customs processing shall be immediately performed through the coordination of the handler with the concerned agency and offices. All necessary documents shall be collected inside the plane.
5. Clark International Airport shall arrange the transport of cases with non-infectious diseases, as necessary. All repatriates who are asymptomatic will be boarded immediately to the vehicle that will ferry them to their assigned destination.
6. Sanitary handling of passengers' baggage shall be attended by the handler.

**D. Travel to the Quarantine Facility**

1. A vehicle with the repatriates and members of the HERT shall be dispatched from the airport with the bus routes arranged and coordinated with the Highway Patrol Group .
2. Routine IPC protocols shall be observed at all times.
3. As necessary, entry of additional DOH Hospital ambulances shall be arranged in the disembarkation area.
4. Aircrafts, vehicles and other transport facilities used shall be properly disinfected.

Refer to *Annex A* for the Process Flow for Medical Repatriation due to 2019-nCoV ARD.





#### IV. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

##### A. Bureau of International Health Cooperation

1. Serves as the central coordinating unit for all cases of repatriation, within and outside the DOH and its attached agencies
2. Coordinates with Chinese health authorities on repatriation arrangements
3. Coordinates with the DFA on the profiles and details of the repatriates
4. Attends to in-flight arrangement and requirement

##### B. Bureau of Quarantine

1. Manages the holding facility
2. Recommends appropriate quarantine measures, as necessary
3. Performs arrival screening and case detection through thermal scanning and the latest Decision Tool for 2019-nCoV ARD Assessment
4. Coordinates with Customs and Immigration for arrival processing
5. Provides initial emergency medical management
6. Transports cases to referral health facilities, as needed

##### C. Disease Prevention and Control Bureau

1. Provides manuals and protocols on IPC
2. Provides guidelines on supportive therapy, management, and monitoring of concomitant comorbidities or other infections
3. Ensures availability of needed logistics for personnel protection and case management

##### D. Epidemiology Bureau

1. Leads in the surveillance and reporting of the cases

##### E. Health Emergency Management Bureau

1. Leads the organization and deployment of HERTs
2. Formulates repatriation plan and guidelines in coordination with BIHC and DFA
3. Coordinates with the Philippine National Police on matters of peace and order, as needed
4. Coordinates transport logistical requirements
5. Reviews and facilitates access to Quick Response Fund

##### F. Health Promotion and Communication Service

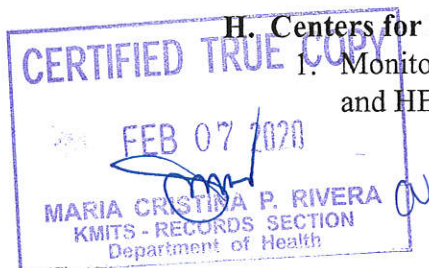
1. Leads in the risk communication and community engagement
2. Develops appropriate communication materials and leads its dissemination

##### G. Finance and Management Division

1. Provides the necessary funds for the repatriation and procurement of logistics and supplies
2. Completes the administrative requirements of repatriation procedures

##### H. Centers for Health Development

1. Monitors situation in the holding facility and coordinates needs of the repatriates and HERTs



2. Ensures daily reporting on the number and status of PUM-Fs to Epidemiology Bureau

**I. DOH Hospitals**

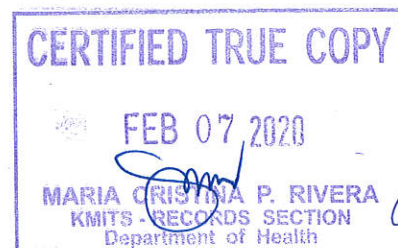
1. Ensures trained medical personnel from the dedicated hospitals are provided as needed and quarantined upon arrival
2. Provides medical specialists and/or laboratory technicians to attend to the needs of OFs with medical conditions
3. Ensures availability of functional isolated health facilities that shall be ready to accept and contain patients under investigation for 2019-nCoV ARD infection immediately

**J. Other agencies and organizations:**

1. Provide necessary technical, logistical and operational support to respond to this PHEIC, as indicated in the Joint Memorandum Circular No. 2017-0001 on the Integrated Policy Guidelines and Procedures in the Implementation of the Inter-Agency Medical Repatriation Assistance Program for OFs
2. Ensure alignment of assistance and support to the identified priorities of the DOH and the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases

For strict compliance of all concerned.

  
FRANCISCO T. DIQUE III, MD, MSc  
Secretary of Health



# Annex A. Process Flow for Medical Repatriation due to 2019-nCoV ARD

