

# DOF says COVID-19 emergency subsidy largest social protection program in PHL history

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# DOH asks Calabarzon task force to stop exodus of people

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## One PH now Free-to-view to all current and old subscribers of Cignal

As one with the nation, Cignal TV is offering one of its news & entertainment channels, One PH, free-to-view for all of its subscribers. This feature is available to both old and new subscribers, even to those with an inactive subscription or out of the prepaid load and with deactivated old boxes.

One PH airs daily news updates on COVID-19 and the enhanced community quarantine in Luzon from 6 AM - 10 PM. These timely updates also include airing relevant briefings throughout the day.



Aside from daily news updates, One PH has a great line-up of current affairs, one of which is 'Wanted Sa Radyo.', hosted by Raffy Tulfo. The program brings cases of abuse, exploitation, dishonesty, family disputes, and any form of injustice in society to light, staying true to Tulfo's no-nonsense approach.

With a hefty roster of available channels, Cignal TV aims to be the source of up-to-date and relevant information for every Filipino. The satellite TV provider offers a diverse set of channels and programs that can connect and communicate to everyone.

Starting March 22 until April 15, 2020, PTV4, TV5 and all Cignal-produced channels (PBA Rush, OneSports+, One News, One Sports, Sari-Sari & Colours) will be free-to-view for all subscribers even for zero load accounts.

Aside from this, from March 24 to April 15, all Postpaid plans 290 and up, and Prepaid loads 100 and up, will be able to enjoy free viewing of more channels.

Subscribers can continue their viewing experience by loading online (Lazada, Shopee, GCash, PayMaya, MegaPay, and BPI), through load retailers (Cignal, Smart, Muenchen, Telepreneur, Load Central, Possible.Net), and via Remittance and Bills Payment Centers (Bayad Center, Mercury Drug, Western Union, Palawan Pawnshop, M. Lhuillier, Cebuana Lhuillier and True Money).

For Postpaid subscribers, Cignal TV extended its payment terms for a month inline with the community quarantine situation of the country.

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## SM DISTRIBUTES PPEs AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES TO OVER 50 HOSPITALS NATIONWIDE



Through SM Foundation, SM is donating over PhP 170 million towards the fight against COVID-19, surpassing its initial allocation of PhP 100 million, to help ensure:

Healthcare workers in hospitals nationwide are armored with personal protective equipment (PPEs) – full protective suits (including for ICU use), face shields, gloves, N95 masks, surgical masks, goggles, and including raincoats as requested by some hospitals as back-up alternatives

Testing is made more widely available, by supporting and donating the local Manila Healthtek test kits developed by the UP-NIH team (upon DOH approval), providing the testing needs of RITM, and donating FDA-approved PCR kits sourced from Korea.

Providing ICU-grade ventilators to help hospitals manage patients with severe cases.

Among the hospitals that received PPE donations as of March 27, 2020 are the following designated

COVID hospitals:

**University of the Philippines**

**PGH**

**Lung Center of the Philippines**

**Jose N. Rodriguez Memorial Hospital**

**Major Government Hospitals:**

**Research Institute for Tropical Medicine**

**(RITM) National Kidney and Transplant Institute**

**San Lazaro Hospital**

**East Avenue Medical Center**

**Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center**

**Philippine Heart Center**

**National Children's Hospital**

**Rizal Medical Center**

Other hospitals include, Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital, Chinese General Hospital, University of the East Ramon Magsaysay (UERM) Memorial Medical Center, Manila Doctors Hospital, University of Sto. Tomas Hospital, Makati Medical Center, The Medical City, Ospital mg Muntinlupa, and more.

Several shipments of PPEs are also on their way to provincial hospitals nationwide, including Rizal, Pampanga, Bataan, Quezon, Pangasinan, Catanduanes, Cebu, Iloilo, Samar, Tacloban, Surigao del Sur, Cagayan de Oro, Davao, Marawi, Zamboanga, and more.

SM has committed to be of service to the Filipino public, its hospitals, and its government, in ensuring that we all contain and overcome the COVID-19 crisis together.

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# EDITORIAL: What's next?

Into the third week on a Luzon-wide lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, speculation is rife over what the government will do after-ward. Some suggest the lockdown will be extended, while others say the government is considering a selective community quarantine in which certain sectors will be allowed to go back to work as a way of resuscitating the battered economy.

It is good to plan, but our leaders would do well to bear in mind the words of Dr. Anthony Fauci, the director of the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, who advises the White House on the COVID-19 crisis: "You've got to be realistic, and you've got to understand that you don't make the timeline, the virus makes the timeline."

Given how little we still know about the virus and how to stop it, talk of a partial lifting of the enhanced community quarantine and social distancing guidelines seems premature, at best, despite the huge economic costs that the lockdown has entailed. Certainly, depriving millions of people of their livelihood carries not only a huge economic price, but a political cost as well that is not lost on our leaders. People must eventually go back to work to put food on the table. How soon they can safely do this is a matter of debate.

Amid all the speculation, however, it is gratifying to hear

Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles, spokesman for the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infections Diseases, say: "In this discussion, science is in charge."

All decision on what comes next over the short term surely must be informed by what is the best course to save lives.

The Philippines recorded on Tuesday its largest daily increase in COVID-19 deaths and infections—538—as it ramped up testing with the arrival of thousands of kits from abroad and the opening of new laboratories.

On Wednesday, eight more deaths took the national toll to 96, while the number of infections climbed to 2,311, with 227 additional cases, the Department of Health reported.

The DOH has opened new labs and run more than 15,000 tests, up from only 3,000 last week, even as more hospitals are seeking government approval to function as testing centers.

Ramping up testing is crucial, because this will let us know the real number of sick people, and the extent of the infections. Over time, testing will also give us a better idea of how the quarantine measures are working.

Hard data and an overriding concern about the need to save lives must trump any wishful thinking about sending people back to work too soon.

## DOH asks ...

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file and pay their taxes early to do so, despite the one-month extension, so that we can fund these programs with the least amount of borrowing," he added.

The government is also working on an economic stimulus package and a rehabilitation plan for the recovery of the country from the COVID-19 crisis.

"NEDA (National Economic and Development Authority) estimates indicate that the economy may shrink by 0.6 percent if no intervention is done. However, GDP (gross domestic product) growth can still reach 4.3 percent if the global health crisis gets resolved in three months' time and we are able to provide a decisive stimulus," Dominguez said.

"This planned stimulus package is already being crafted and will be responsive to the uncertainties of the situation," he said. "At this point, nobody knows how bad this pandemic will get or how long it will last."

The finance department considers the financing gap challenging, he said, but noted that the country is in a relatively better position now than it was during the 1997 Asian financial flu when the Philippines found

# First Kaunlaran Caravan in 2020 goes 'home'

The Kaunlaran Caravan has flown to various provinces in the Philippines since its inception in 2017. For its first leg this year, the caravan goes back to Laguna, the home province of its implementor CARD Mutually Reinforcing Institution (CARD MRI).

"After bringing our services to local communities around the country, it's about time that we reach out to communities in Laguna where CARD started. We have chosen to take Kaunlaran Caravan to Sta. Maria since it is the furthest municipality in Laguna," said CARD MRI Managing Director Flordeliza Sarmiento.

Sta. Maria is a 4th class municipality in Laguna and has a population of 30, 830. CARD MRI has more than 6,000 clients coming from its two financial institutions located in the municipali-

ty namely, CARD, Inc. (A microfinance NGO) and CARD MRI Rizal Bank. In addition, 80% of Sta. Maria's population has insurance coverage through CARD's microinsurance program.

Kaunlaran Caravan is a quarterly activity of CARD MRI that brings community development programs to different provinces in the Philippines. The program offers free medical, optical, dental and pre-natal check-ups. A mass wedding is also held along with a livelihood training and microinsurance orientation.

Financial literacy through storytelling and health education is also offered in the one-day activity. Services such as free haircut, nail cleaning and massage are also provided to promote total wellness and proper hygiene. The activity is primarily for CARD microfinance clients and their

dependents and to the general public.

Additionally, there will be an orientation regarding COVID-19 to educate the community on the virus and its health hazards and to provide information on how to prevent possible transmission. "Our institution is concerned about the continuous spread of misinformation on the disease that could cause panic in a community. In a rural community like Sta. Maria, it is important to educate the people with right information about COVID-19 and how to prevent getting infected by it," Microfinance and Health Protection (MaHP) Director Dr. Roderick Belen said.

"As the needs of our clients continue to evolve, we will continue to improve on how we deliver these services by adding programs that could bring positive change

## Exodus of people ...

The Department of Health (DOH) in Bicol has asked the Interagency Task Force (IATF) for the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) in Calabarzon to strictly enforce the Luzon-wide enhanced community quarantine and not allow people to either enter or leave their area.

The Calabarzon consists of Cavite, Lagu-

na, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon provinces.

Dr. Ernie Vera, DOH-Bicol director, expressed concern about the exodus of people from Metro Manila, which resulted in over 305 people stranded at the borders of Camarines Norte and Camarines Sur with Quezon province.

"The Calabarzon

is hard to access financing for its programs to deal with the crisis.

"A large part of our strength is because of the Comprehensive Tax Reform Program (CTRP), which allowed us to raise in advance additional revenues worth almost P200 billion in 2018 and 2019. We are now using such resources to protect the economy against risks such as COVID-19," Dominguez said.

"We are in talks with the World Bank (WB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for concessional financing of up to US\$2 billion. More will be financed from loan syndications from the banks," he added. "So far, the Philippine government has received a grant of US\$3 million from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and a loan facility of US\$100 million from the World Bank (WB)."

Other budgetary powers granted to the President under RA 11469 include the authority to:

1. Direct the discontinuance of appropriated programs, projects or activities (PAP) of any agency of the Executive Department, including GOCCs, in the 2019 and 2020 General Appropriations Act (GAA), and utilize the savings generated therefrom;
2. Appropriate any unutilized or unreleased balance in a special purpose fund, effective during the date of the declaration of the State of Public Health Emergency;
3. Allocate any unutilized or unreleased subsidies and transfers held by any GOCC or national government (NG) agency;
4. Reprogram, reallocate, and realign from savings from other appropriation items in the Executive Department's FY 2020 GAA; and
5. Allocate cash, funds and investments held by GOCCs or any NG agency. (DOF.GOV)

region must heed the request or we will be forced to take this matter to the national IATF," Vera said in an interview Thursday.

He said people from Metro Manila would be automatically considered as persons under monitoring (PUMs), increasing the number of PUMs in Bicol.

As of March 25, there is no confirmed Covid-19 case in Bicol but there are 116,729 PUMs and 16 patients under investigation (PUIs).

A total of 305 people returning from Metro Manila were stopped at police checkpoints in Del Gallego town in Camarines Sur amid the community quarantine to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

A report reaching the Bicol Interagency Task Force (BIATF) said those people were crossing the closed Bicol-Quezon boundary.

They are now in various holding areas in the towns of Del Gallego and Libmanan to undergo 14-day quarantine.

The report said as of 7 p.m. Wednesday, the border checkpoint in Del Gallego had in custody 120 residents of Camarines Sur; 85 from Albay; Sorsogon-38; Masbate-43; Leyte-nine; Western Visayas-nine and Mindanao-one.

The BIATF on Monday declared a total

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lockdown and blocked all entrance and exit points in the borders of the six provinces of Bicol to stop the influx of people returning home not only to the region but also to the Visayas and Mindanao through the ports in Albay and Sorsogon.

Meanwhile, Brig. Gen. Anthony Alcañeses, Bicol police regional director, urged local government units to find ways to fetch their residents staying in the holding areas and bring them to their respective residences.

He cited the humanitarian service made by Sorsogon Gov. Francis Escudero where he sent a transport vehicle to pick up Sorsogon residents who were held for crossing Camarines Sur boundaries without quarantine documents.

Alcañeses said that some Bicol residents from Metro Manila and other Luzon provinces are using alternative routes in entering Bicol.

"Some people, aside from using roads and railways, even cross rice fields to reach their destinations," he said.

Alcañeses said he has directed all provincial police units in the region to strictly enforce the lockdown policy by establishing checkpoints on primary and secondary roads including rail road crossings. (PNA)



## Extend price freeze on LPG, kerosene amid COVID-19

With the enhanced community quarantine expected to go beyond April, Senator Win Gatchalian is calling on the government to extend the price freeze on Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) which households commonly use for their day-to-day needs.

Gatchalian made the call as the prevailing price freeze on LPG and Kerosene products is set to lapse on March 31. The Department of Energy (DOE) earlier imposed a 15-day price freeze on LPG and Kerosene products after President Rodrigo Duterte declared a State of Calamity in the whole Philippines due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

The Senate Committee on Energy chairman said imposing a 15-day price freeze on LPG does not make any sense since the price determination of the socially-sensitive product is conducted on a monthly basis.

Given the prevailing health crisis situation in the country, Gatchalian urges the DOE to recommend to President Rodrigo Duterte to extend the price freeze while the enhanced community quarantine is in effect. Gatchalian cited DOE's Department Circular 2016-08-0013 stating that prices of LPG and Kerosene will become normal after the 15-day price freeze, unless a mandated price freeze is imposed by the President, upon the recommendation of the DOE.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has earlier announced a nationwide price freeze on all basic goods and necessities for 60 days, unless lifted by the President. The DTI has emphasized that household LPG and kerosene are the basic goods under the DOE. In the commercial sector, LPG consumption rose at a rapid pace of 10.4% annually from 2007 to 2017, as reported by the DOE.

"The DOE should extend the prevailing price freeze until the situation has normalized to ensure that all Filipinos are protected from any price manipulation during the entire enhanced community quarantine period," Gatchalian said.

On March 2, oil companies decreased the price of LPG by P3.90/kg or about P42.90/11-kg cylinder. Auto LPG likewise decreased by P2.20/liter. In Metro Manila, the price of household LPG ranges from P612.10-735.10 per 11-kilogram cylinder.

Aside from calling for a price freeze extension, Gatchalian also urges the DOE to be vigilant against unscrupulous traders who will take advantage of the crisis. He urges the public to immediately report pricing abuses to the DOE.

The lawmaker also calls for a close collaboration between the DOE and local government units (LGUs) to ensure the unimpeded delivery of energy services during the entire enhanced community quarantine period.

Gatchalian reminds LGUs that fuel and petroleum products are included in the Inter Agency Task Force' guidelines on products allowed to be transported.

## DOH asks ...

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The expanded but limited budgetary powers granted by the 18th Congress to President Duterte will let the government realign certain state funds to deliver P200 billion in emergency subsidies to 18 million low-income households that have lost their sources of income amid the pandemic spawned by the highly infectious virus known as COVID-19—the largest financial aid package ever granted to Filipino households.

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III has said, "The P200-billion program for distribution in cash and basic needs over the next two months is the largest direct financial assistance program granted by the government to Filipino families in our country's history."

This is in keeping, said Dominguez, with the directive of President Duterte for his Administration to give top and urgent priority to providing a lifeline to Filipino

# SM FOUNDATION, NAGHANDOG NG MEDICAL SUPPLIES SA MGA OSPITAL LABAN SA COVID-19

Bilang suporta sa mas pinaigting na laban ng mga Medical Frontliners sa lumalalang pagkakat ng COronaVirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, nagsimula nang maghatid ng mga medical supplies sa iba't ibang ospital at medical institutions sa kalakhang Maynila at karatig bayan ang SM Group sa pangunguna ng SM Foundation (SMFI). Mahigit kumulang 20,000 N95 masks, 2,500 gallons ng alcohol, 100 face shields, at 100 sets ng N95 masks at goggles na ang naipamahagi sa 18 ospital at medical institutions na kasalukuyang nangangalaga sa mga pasyenteng



tinamaan ng sakit at mga nakakaranas ng sintomas nito.

Ito ay parte ng ipinangakong tulong ng SM Group na naglaan ng Php100 million na tulong para sa paglaban sa sakit na COVID-19. Bago ito, inanunsyo na ng kumpanya ang naunang tulong sa mga tenants nito sa buong bansa sa pamamagitan ng hindi pagsingil ng upa, patuloy na pagpapasahod sa mga employado nito, at pamamahagi ng tulong pinansiyal bilang Emergency Financial Assistance sa kanilang mga frontliners na security guards at janitor sa kabuuan ng enhanced community quarantine period.

families hit the hardest by the pandemic, which has brought the economy to a virtual standstill.

Enacted on March 24, 2020, Republic Act (RA) No. 11469, or the "Bayanihan to Heal as One Act," has empowered the President to realign or reallocate savings generated from the 2020 national budget and extended 2019 budget as well as available funds from government-owned or -controlled corporations (GOCCs) for priority programs to combat COVID-19 and bankroll the P200-billion emergency subsidy program.

"We will urgently deliver this emergency subsidy to millions of our fellow Filipinos who live day-to-day on subsistence earnings or 'no-work, no-pay' arrangements," Dominguez said. He said "the subsidies will be delivered through various national and local programs in the form of food, cash, and other essentials for the next two months, as provided in RA 11469."

Although he recognized the need for state support to businesses so they could be back on their feet once the pandemic is over, Dominguez said such assistance would have to take the backseat in the meantime in favor of the most urgent priority, which is to help an estimated 18 million Filipino households most affected by the virtual economic standstill resulting from the COVID-19 global crisis.

Said Dominguez: "We need to take care of our people first because that is the primordial duty of the government and society, especially during crises such as this pandemic that has claimed the lives of over 30,000 worldwide and battered the global economy."

"We will eventually put in place programs for affected businesses so the economy could bounce back as soon as we beat this lethal virus," he said. "For the moment, the government must attend to displaced families and keep Filipino workers healthy so they are ready for the subsequent resurgence in economic activity."

Through the subsidy program, the government will, under the new law, give P5,000 to P8,000 each month for two months to some 18 million Filipino households most vulnerable to the economic slowdown resulting from the COVID-19 crisis and are now unable to earn their living under the stay-at-home or community quarantine conditions.

Of these beneficiaries, 4.3 million families are recipients of the P2,150 average monthly subsidy from the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) component of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)'s Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) program.

"For those who are already receiving grants from various national and local programs, the gov-

ernment will provide them with a top-up or additional support to meet the P5,000 to P8,000 subsidy amount," Dominguez said.

Beneficiary-families will each get a monthly subsidy of P5,000 to P8,000 for two months, to be computed based on the minimum daily wage rates in their respective regions.

The DOF estimates that around P97.4 billion is needed per month to finance the subsidy, or almost P200 billion for two months, plus administrative costs totaling P5.1 billion.

"Upon a quick review of our financial situation, we discovered that more than P200 billion can be made available quickly to fund this emergency subsidy. We have more than P100 billion-worth of cash and cash equivalents in various GOCC accounts, and another P100 billion more in various national government accounts outside the Treasury Single Account (TSA)," the Finance Secretary said.

Dominguez appealed to private-sector employers to do their part in protecting the welfare of some 6.6 million Filipino families dependent on their businesses and who belong to the formal economy.

"We urge business leaders and enterprise owners to support their workers who may have savings, but might need additional assistance during this difficult time," he said.

"We will do what is necessary for the government to spearhead national efforts to overcome this crisis, which means we need to spend at levels that will definitely make us exceed our previously estimated 3.6 percent deficit threshold," he said.

"Thus, we appeal to taxpayers who are able to

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**Carmona LGU releases COVID-19 Updates as of today:** The local government of Carmona released the current updates of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the municipality through a post on their official social media accounts on March 31, 2020. Currently, there are 40 persons under monitoring (PUMs) and 5 persons under investigation (PUIs) in which the local government is still waiting for their swab test examination results.

## COURAGE AMIDST FEAR WITHIN THE CRISIS: THE STORIES OF SM CITY BACOOR FRONTLINERS



**Carmona midwives conduct infant immunization in barangays:** On April 1, 2020, midwives went to barangays to give infants vaccines to continue the local government's immunization programs while the Enhanced Community Quarantine is still being implemented in the whole municipality.



**Carmona LGU delivers situation reports through drone shot:** In line with the local government's mitigation efforts to prevent coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the community, drone shots situation reports at Barangays Milagroza and Mabuhay were released on April 1, 2020 for strict monitoring of the implementation of the local government's social distancing measures.



**NGOs and companies continuously donate to Carmona frontliners:** Non-government organizations and companies continuously give their donations on March 31, 2020 at the Carmona Municipal Hall such personal protective equipment (PPEs) and food for frontliners who work everyday for the safety and welfare of the community against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

In these times when most of us would think about ourselves and our own families, there would still be heroes standing out who never wear capes just to show off their courage. Truly, a great crisis would bring chaos, the worst in people, but on the other hand would still bring the best out of humanity. When all of us were scared to go out and be exposed, others are taking risk of their own safety, as well as of their family just to provide all the essentials we need. From food we put on our tables, medicines our families would need, trashes that needs disposal, to establishments and borders that needs safekeeping and hospitals that needs to keep running, these are the stories of some heroes we would frequently meet.

Raymart Cortez is one of the front liners from SM City Bacoor residing at the same city. As one of the members of the Janitorial team who keeps the mall premises clean and sanitized especially now that we need more stocks from the Supermarket, his work is one of the most

important. Despite being a breadwinner, he still would take risk and attend to his job despite of the pandemic. "Napakahalaga po sa akin ng trabaho ko ngayon kasi dito ko po kinukuha ang pang araw-araw naming gastusin. May takot ako kasi po kung sakali naman na ako ang mahawaan-huwag naman po sana, ay magugutom ang aking pamilya, magugutom po ang aking mga anak at asawa." said Cortez who despite of his fear would diligently do his duty to protect not just his family but also the community. The same courage is seen with Redel Silva, a front liner and one of the Janitorial team from SM City Bacoor who's also residing at the same city. Despite of his fear for himself and his family, he still attends to his job to protect the community and the shoppers who are seeking food, medical and hygiene supplies in the mall. "Mahalaga sa akin ang trabaho ko lalo na ngayon."

While all of us are worried sanitizing our home, Haidee Mansarate of EXTRAORDINAIRE Manpower Agency, another

front liner from SM City Bacoor sees to it that she and her team are at their best in sanitizing the establishment for the safety of other front liners and the shoppers so they won't catch the deadly virus. "Para saakin, isa ito sa pinakaimportanteng trabaho sa panahon ngayon. Ang pagpapanatili ng kalinisan ay magbibigay ng kaligtasan sa lahat ng customers upang maiwasan ang pagkalat at paglaganap ng nakakahawang virus. We have safety measures, safe kami." Said Mansarate who despite them being at risk, is grateful that SM assures their safety as well. "People should listen and follow all the safety precautions. Social distancing is the key. Sa panahon ngayon mas okay ang mag stay sa bahay to keep safe. Covid-19 is a serious crisis we are facing right now. All of us must cooperate. Amidst the crisis, let us not forget to thank and salute to these hard workers who are keeping us safe and protected in our battle against COVID-19.

## Covid-19 cases now 3,246; death toll climbs to 152

MANILA — The Department of Health (DOH) on Sunday reported 152 new positive cases for coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-2019), bringing the total number of cases in the country to 3,246.

In its 4 p.m. case bulletin, the DOH also reported seven additional recoveries -- bringing the total number of recovered cases in the country to 64 -- and eight new deaths, totaling the number of deaths nationwide to 152.

It has not provided details on the new cases, recoveries, and deaths yet. During the virtual presser, DOH Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire requested the public not to discriminate patients with Covid-19.

"Lahat tayo ay pwedeng mahawa ng Covid-19 tulad ng ibang sakit, wala itong sini-sino. Mapanganib ang diskriminasyon sa sakit na ito, maaari itong maging dahilan para itago ng mga tao ang kanilang mga sakit o sintomas (Covid-19 spares no one. Anybody can be infected by it. Discrimination against the disease is dangerous as it may become the reason for people to hide their sickness or symptoms)," she said.

Vergeire urged the public to redirect their worries about contacting the disease to proper actions -- proper and regular handwashing, staying at home and observing physical distancing and proper cough etiquette. (PNA)