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TOWARDS A HEALTHIER AND SAFER METRO MANILA

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NCR-WIDE : SYNCHRONIZED CLEAN-UP DRIVE "DENG-GET-OUT!"



By: Nieza Mae Orpano



It was spearheaded by the DOH Secretary Francisco T. Duque III with Metro Manila Center for Health Development (MMCHD) OIC-Director IV Dr. Corazon Flores, and Metro Manila Center for Health Development (MMCHD) Director III Dr. Maria Paz Corrales in collaboration with 17 local government units, Department of Education (DepEd), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Commission on Higher Education (CHED).

The Secretary of Health emphasized the 4 o'clock habit strategy and implementation of other vector control measures like installation of ovitraps and insecticide treated screens (ITS) in public elementary schools, space spraying and Targeted Outdoors Residual Spraying (TORS) in dengue hotspot areas. He reminded and encouraged the residents, most especially the children aged 5 to 9 that ranks number one as victim of dengue, to drink more water to increase immune system.

Secretary Duque discouraged the residents to wear tight outfits that can easily be penetrated and dark-colored clothes that are attractive to dengue carrying-mosquitos and can possibly be taken off as mosquito camouflage to prevent the further increase of dengue cases.

However, the DOH encourages the public to exercise daily search and destroy, self-protection measure, seek early consultation when symptomatic, and support space spraying or fogging in identified areas.

The program settled as the Secretary demonstrated the use of ovitraps and cleaned along Barangay Commonwealth, and followed by the 4 o'clock habit involving the residents and other local government unit.



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DOH kicks off 4 o'clock Habit in San Juan; Sec Duque highlights **FOURmula** to students

By: Dana Nicole D. Mirador

SAN JUAN - As the Department of Health - National Capital Region (DOH-NCR) continues to fight dengue threat on Filipino health through the FOURmula (4-S) Kontra drive held at Pinaglabanan Elementary School, August 29.

Together with the Local Government Unit (LGU) led by Mayor Francisco Javier Zamora and with the cooperation of Mr. Alejandro Ibañes, the School Division Superintendent, and Mr. Dennis Bacle, the Pinagbuhatan Elementary School Principal, the program was also attended by the Secretary of Health Dr. Francisco T. Duque III and DOH-NCR Regional Director, Dra. Corazon I. Flores and her officials.

The program steered to the idea of the 4-S Kontra Dengue and 4 o'clock Habit, which is a city-wide synchronized clean-up drive seized every strike of 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

Secretary Duque emphasized a few reminders in his message which mainly encourages the residents, most especially the children aged 5 to 9 that ranks number one as victim of dengue, to drink more water if sign and symptoms of dengue occur.

"Kapag po nawala ang tubig sa katawan, ang atin pong mga bato ay 'di nakakapag-filter ng mga dumi sa buong katawan. Alam naman natin, it is our filtering organ of the body kaya hydration is very important. Kailangan ay uminom ng maraming tubig. Kung p'wedeng pilitin, minsan kasi ang bata kapag may sakit, ayaw. Ang mga bata po ang number one na binibiktima ng dengue" Secretary Duque said.

However, the Honorable Secretary stated that dengue signs and symptoms should not be neglected if spotted on a victimized person, "Wag po natin balewalain, 'wag na nating hayaan na nagdurugo sa ilong, sa gilagid, sa tenga at kung saan-saan pang parte ng katawan. But then, it is too late."

The message also emphasized the opposition of wearing dark-colored that are attractive to dengue-carrying mosquitos and can possibly be taken off as mosquito camouflage. Secretary Duque also stressed the avoidance of wearing tight outfits which can easily be penetrated.

Meanwhile after the program, Secretary demonstrated the use of ovitraps along Barangay Corazon De Jesus, followed by the 4 o'clock Habit involving the residents and the LGU.

First AFHF Level III recognition encourages Health facilities to be YOUTH-FRIENDLY

By: Dana Nicole D. Mirador

Over 35 health facilities nationwide were recognized as 'Adolescent-Friendly Health Facilities' (AFHF) in the first National Recognition of Adolescent-Friendly Health Facilities Level III for setting the goal to make their facilities fit for adolescents and their health-related needs.

Among the awardees in the National Capital Region under the Metro Manila Center for Health Development were the NGC Teen Health Quarter and Marikina Youth Health and Wellness Center.

An AFHF was defined by the Department of Health as a "health facility that provides equitable, accessible, acceptable, appropriate, effective, and quality comprehensive health care and services in an adolescent-friendly environment." Approximately, there were 704 AFHF nationwide – 617 Level I, 52 Level II, and 35 Level III.

Moreover, the atmosphere of the event was set to the health-related situations of the adolescents when Health Undersecretary Myrna C. Cabotaje stressed the needs of the rising number of young people that were usually blocked by discrimination and shame in disclosing their problems.

"In recent years, issues such as early pregnancy, sexually-transmitted infections including HIV and AIDS, substance abuse, violence and mental illnesses, dumadami po ang depression at saka suicide among our adolescents." Undersecretary Cabotaje stated.

Likewise, there was also the need for an AFHF since adolescents delay their health care services due to crowded health facilities, as well as the unsupportive and judgmental health care providers that causes difficulty in ensuring privacy and confidentiality of adolescents.

"Crowding facilities, 'eto po 'yung isa sa inexpress ng ating recently uploaded 'Kapit-kamay!' in teenage pregnancy." Undersecretary Cabotaje said.

"Natatakot, nahihiya nagaalangan pumunta 'yung mga adolescents sa mga health center because they have unsupportive and judgmental health care providers and kulang ng privacy and confidentiality so they were unable to access in our health care facilities."

With the blueprint of the Universal Health Care Act, Undersecretary Cabotaje encouraged every health facilities to elevate health services to ensure health and safety while allowing citizens to grow into a well-reformed, empowered, responsible and healthy citizen.



DOH, DWSD led the celebration of Family Health Day 2019

By: Dana Nicole D. Mirador



The 1st celebration of Family Health Day consisting of Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4P's) has been successful through the efforts of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in collaboration with the Department of Health (DOH), September 23.

The day-long celebration was held at San Andres Sports Complex with the theme "Tungo sa Maginhawa, Matatag at Panatag na Pamilyang Pilipino" which was the first family day that focused mainly on health along with annual Family Week.

The success of the health event was made possible with the DSWD mainly focused on the identification and mobilization of families while the DOH took primary role of covering and providing the health services related to family health.

Such health services offered on the said event were under the coverage Family Health Cluster such as Adolescent health and Development.

Program, National Safe Motherhood Program, Family Planning, Nutrition Program, National Immunization Program, and Oral Health.

The participants, moreover, who were labeled as 4P's are those who are not actively visiting health facilities regularly in district 3 and 4 entailing of Manila, Mandaluyong, Makati, San Juan, Muntinlupa, Paranaque, Pasay and Las Piñas.

Primarily, the one-day celebration served the purpose of creating an awareness for the 4P's to know the family-related health and development services that are offered inside the health facilities.

The Family Health Day was sourced out from the Presidential Proclamation no. 60 series 1992 declaring that every last week of September of every year is celebrated as Family Week in order to recognize the sanctity and importance of family in the society.

Meanwhile, if the event is said to be successful, the Family Health Day will continue to cater health services to district 1 and 2.



Generic Sum-It up as Successful

By: Dana Nicole D. Mirador

In its 31st awareness and promotion of Generic Act and the use of generic medicines, the Generic Summit was participated and celebrated by health pharmacists and other health practitioners in the NCR region, September 25, held at Manila Grand Opera Hotel.

With the theme "Sa Generics na Mura at Mabisa, Universal Health Care, aarangkada", the Pharmaceutical Division led the discussion pertaining to Generic Awareness, Drug Price Reference Index, Antimicrobial Resistance and Drug Price Watch.

It is the intention of the annual event to create an open awareness that generic medicines are of same potency compared to branded ones.

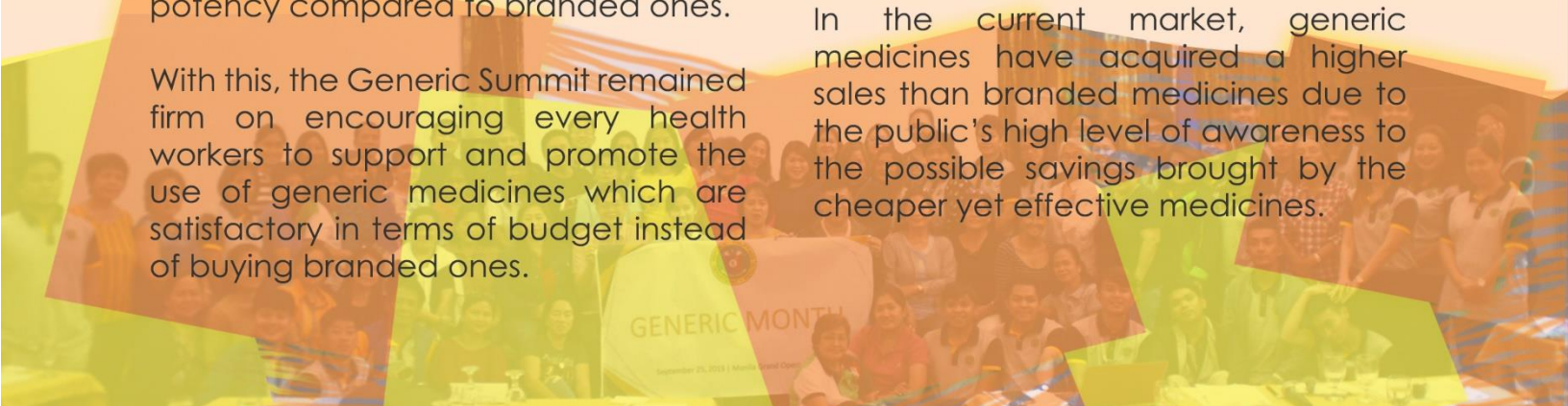
With this, the Generic Summit remained firm on encouraging every health workers to support and promote the use of generic medicines which are satisfactory in terms of budget instead of buying branded ones.

Along with the discussion, Dr. Irene B. Florentino-Farinas of the Pharmaceutical Division also emphasized the coverage of the Universal Health Care Act including a more empowered communication from the primary to tertiary level of health services.

This also includes an efficient referral system and a more capable Health Technologies Assessment (HTA) which weighs and filters health technologies for public service.

Farinas, moreover, shared that the Government is after costly medicines yet effective in its potency rather than cheap medicines but ineffectual.

In the current market, generic medicines have acquired a higher sales than branded medicines due to the public's high level of awareness to the possible savings brought by the cheaper yet effective medicines.



DOH and Rotary signs MOA to END POLIO OUTBREAK



By: Dana Nicole D. Mirador

The partnership between the Department of Health (DOH) and the Rotary International's 10 districts was formally signed on a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to ensure the eradication of polio outbreak once and for all during the launching of 'End Polio Forever in the Philippines' program held at the Rotary Center, September 30, 2019.

After 19 years of being a polio-free country, the DOH announced an outbreak next to a report of a 3-year-old girl who was infected by polio, followed by several reports of suspected cases around the country.

The fight against Polio continued as the Rotary District Governor Bernadette "BH" Herrera shared that an agreement meeting was called to order when Herrera and Health Secretary Francisco T. Duque III decided to team-up against the spread of disease to show their all-out campaign and support for the project. Likewise, Secretary Duque believed the campaign will succeed again to eradicate Polio, which has been running down towards 99.9% reduction for more than 30 years through their vaccination of children.



This agreement formed between parties has come in the most opportune time. We fervently hope that through our collective effort and synergistic action, we can control and quell the reemergence of such rarely fatal virus that could potentially affect our children and their future. We have done it before and I believe we can do it again," Secretary Duque stated.

The Rotary International's 10 districts pledged to support the fight against polio through fundraising, advocacy and volunteer recruitment, while the DOH will continue to intensify its health promotion activities by focusing more on sanitation and hygiene and its preparation for a response polio vaccination campaign.

Currently, the Department of Health-Metro Manila Center for Health Development has already conducted rounds of supplemental oral polio immunization to ensure protection against the disease among children under 5 years old.



DOH unveils Las Pinas Premier DATRC

By: Dana Nicole D. Mirador

The Las Pinas Drug Abuse Treatment and Rehabilitation Center (DATRC) is now open for public service after the Department of Health – Metro Manila Center for Health Development (DOH-MMCHD) conducted its soft opening in support of the Government's campaign against illegal drugs, October 7, 2019.

Through the 2018 GAA budget, the DOH acquired the 2,755 sq. m. unfinished office for the League of Vice Mayors and Board Members from the Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA) for the establishment of the Las Pinas DATRC.

The newly-opened drug rehabilitation was inaugurated by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte on December 13, 2018 which can cater 158 male and 98 female drug dependents and surrenderees under the supervision of Dr. Alfonso A. Villaroman.

Pursuant to Senate Bill No. 399 sponsored by Senator Christopher "Bong" Go stating that there should be DATRC in every province as supervised by DOH, it is also the goal of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) to have atleast one DATRC on each of the NCR's four parts.

Moreover, the Las Pinas DATRC was envisioned to be a premier drug rehabilitation in providing drug treatment and rehabilitation services and will serve as a model in the southern portion of the National Capital Region.

"Ang mahalaga po ay gawin po nating ehemplo, gawin po nating modelo ang Las Pinas City DATRC dahil kinakailangan po natin ng mga model facilities na para tularan ng iba pang mga DATRCs ng DOH." Secretary Duque said.

Meanwhile, the soft opening was graced by Health Secretary Francisco T. Duque III, Senator Cynthia Villar, and DILG Undersecretary Ricojudge Janvier

DOH: 96% coverage of vaccinees on first round of 'Sabayang Patak Kontra Polio'

By: Dana Nicole Mirador



An average of 96% of children aged 0-59 months were vaccinated in the first round of nationwide Sabayang Patak Kontra Polio, spearheaded by the Department of Health (DOH) - Center for Health Development (CHD) on October 14-27, 2019.

For two weeks, the Synchronized Polio Vaccination was conducted in the National Capital Region (NCR), and within identified areas of Mindanao such as Lanao Del Sur, Marawi City, and Davao City.

The eventful immunization was made in response to the DOH's declaration of Polio outbreak last September 19, and was supported by the Local Government Units (LGUs), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other private partners.

In the National Capital Region (NCR), the cities that achieved 100% of the goal in the first round were Taguig City, Pateros, Quezon City, Makati City and Muntinlupa City.

Other cities that contributed to the success of the Sabayang Patak were Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas, Valenzuela, Pasig, Marikina, Mandaluyong, Manila, San Juan, Paranaque, Las Pinas and Pasay.

Overall, the DOH achieved a coverage rate of 69% during the first round, including the recorded vaccinees in the Mindanao region.

Poliomyelitis or infantile paralysis is an infectious disease brought by poliovirus transmitted through the fecal-oral route. This mostly targets children under 5 years old.

The paralyzing disease can be prevented with polio vaccine.

Meanwhile, the DOH is expected to conduct the second round of the Sabayang Patak Kontra Polio on November 25 to December 8 for the final dose of the polio vaccine.

Gabi ng Parangal highlights LGU integrity awardees 2019



By: Dana Nicole D. Mirador

Bagging six awards in one night, Valenzuela City Health Officer Dr. Jaime Exconde, Jr. represents his city as he received their award as "Best in Local Health System Development" along with the cash prize and plaque at the 2019 Gabi ng Parangal held at the Crowne Plaza Manila Galleria.

Other awards given to Valenzuela City were Best in Health Promotion, Best in Supply Chain Management and Best Surveillance Unit.

The Gabi ng Parangal is a featured manifestation of the Department of Health- Metro Manila Center for Health Development's 32nd Anniversary that confers various health program awards under a single and harmonized recognition event.

With the 2019 theme "Recognizing Integrity and Commitment to Health", Deputy Director General of Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA) Ernesto Perez said that delayed health care services can have a huge implication on the well-being of a person.



Thus, it is a crucial part of the health sector where people's lives are being handled. Deputy Director Perez, in his keynote address, emphasized the importance of the Local Government Units (LGUs) in their involvement with the delivery of quality and reliable health services.

"You are the true champions in public service for ensuring the wellness of our people to the best of your ability. But the challenges do not end here." Perez said in his keynote message.

"Our push for faster, more responsive, and efficient health care services, what the people can be better achieved if we can influence our fellow government workers, another government agencies whom we've worked with to practice integrity and commitment to health."

Other top awardees were Quezon City garnering three awards, while Muntinlupa City and Marikina City receiving two awards each respectively.



DOH honors BHW on their Polio door-to-door efforts

By: Dana Nicole D. Mirador

The Department of Health-Center for Health Development participated in the Annual Convention of the Barangay Health Workers (BHW) Federation of National Capital Region to be one in expressing their deep gratitude and appreciation to the frontliners of the Synchronized Polio Vaccination.

Living out the theme “Sa Kalusugang Pangkalahatan, BHW ay Maaasahan”, the event was graced by DOH Assistant Regional Director Ma. Paz Corrales, BHW Partylist Representative Angelca Natasha Co, President of National BHW Confederation Zenaida Pulido and the BHW Chief of Staff Ayeen Sian.

Assistant Regional Director Corrales said that the DOH appreciated the efforts of the health workers in obtaining 96% coverage during the first round of the synchronized polio vaccination that was conducted last October 14-27, 2019.

“Sa DOH, kami po ang gumagawa ng policy pagdating sa health, sa kalusugan, ngunit kayo po ang nag-i-implement at kayo po ang nagpapatakbo dahil kayo po ang nakakaranig ng mga hinanaing ng mga tao sa baba sa community. Ganon po kayo kahalaga sa amin. Hindi po tatakbo ang DOH kung wala kayo. ‘Yan po ang katotohanan at ‘yan po ay aming nire-recognize, and we really appreciate that.” Assistant Director Corrales said.

Futhermore, the DOH emphasized the need for BHWs in re-vaccinating the children for the second round of the Sabayang Patak Kontra Polio on November 25 to December 8.

“Yong mga nakatanggap po ng round one ay kailangang makatanggap po ulit ng pangalawang bakuna ng polio. Nakikiusap po ako, kasama ng aking mga kasamahan, tulungan n’yo po kaming ma-obtain ulit ang 96%, o kung hindi man, mas mataas. Kayo po ang frontliners, kayo po ang champion ng kalusugan.” Health Assistant Director Corrales said.

DOH

Action to the TAAL VOLCANO Situation

By: Nieza Mae Orpano

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) raised an alert level 4 (Imminent hazardous eruption) regarding the observed eruptive activity of the Taal Volcano. In response, Department of Health (DOH) was placed on Code White Alert so all health personnel were placed on standby for deployment in order to coordinate with PHIVOLCS and National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC).

Barangays near the epicenter of the volcanic activity were cautioned to be vigilant and advised to take precautionary measures against possible health effects especially the residents of Taal Volcano Island and the nearby barangays of Agoncillo and Laurel, Batangas.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III directed those affected with symptoms brought by inhalation of smoke and exposure to go to the nearest health facility for immediate medical attention. Protective clothing and equipment were also advised to be worn by those in the immediate affected area. Further precautions were recommended such as turning off the air conditioning and fans, close windows and doors, and proceeding with caution during driving.

Metro Manila Center for Health Development (MMCHD) donated additional water and alcohols to the Local Government Unit of Tagaytay. They also provided health assistance, consultation and checkups for the residents.

In addition, Dr. Jose N. Rodriguez Memorial Hospital and Sanitation Health Emergency Management Bureau and Philippine Medical Assistance Team were also deployed for assessment and augmentation of manpower in different evacuation centers and municipalities in the affected region.

In addition, DOH expressed its support to their regional offices for resources such as drugs, medicines and other medical supplies. Water containers and hygiene kits were also given to residents of CALABARZON and National Capital Region (NCR), Sec. Duque reported.

There was continuous monitoring of the situation and developments of the volcanic activity as well continuous supply of medical necessities to meet the needs of the people provided by DOH.



DOH campaign against Polio Outbreak

By: Nieza Mae Orpano

Department of Health (DOH) confirmed seven (7) cases of Polio disease with three (3) of the samples sent to the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine and to the National Institute of Infectious Diseases-Japan.

Regional Epidemiology Unit (RESU) Chief Dr. Manuel Mapue from the Metro Manila Center for Health Development (MCHD) stated that the anti-polio vaccine given in National Capital Region (NCR) during the months of October to December 2019 were for immunization against type 1 and type 3 polio. According to Health Secretary Francisco Duque III, "We should not be satisfied with our children receiving only 1 or 2 doses of the polio vaccine. Let us ensure that they receive complete doses of the vaccine to fully protect them from Polio."

In response to the rising cases of Polio patients, DOH extends the campaign "Sabayang Patak Kontra Polio" (SPKP) and announced additional rounds in all regions of Mindanao and the National Capital Region (NCR). The immunization that will be administered is for the type 2 polio. This round of vaccine is to boost the children's immunity for the three (3) existing types of polio viruses.

In the National Capital Region, the first immunization rounds in 2020 were from January 27, 2020 to February 09, 2020 with 1,386,573 or 98.73% of the target population of 1,404,517. The second round of immunizations were from February 24, 2020 to March 08, 2020 and it boasts of 102% or 1,432,065 out of the 1,404,517 of target population.

Health Secretary Duque stated in conclusion, "We need to provide evidence that the transmission of poliovirus is already contained before we can end the SPKP campaign. Therefore, the fight against polio is far from over. For us to effectively and successfully stop the transmission of this disease, we need to sustain our synchronized efforts. We must continue to ensure that no child is left unvaccinated."





Photo courtesy: UNTV News

C . O . D . E . Initiative Against Covid-19

By: Nieza Mae Orpano

Local Government Units all over Metro Manila started operations in order to fight the spread of the Coronavirus. Labeled as C.O.D.E or Coordinated Operations to Defeat Epidemic, cities each are employing their own action plans in order to lower the infection rate in their respective areas.

The C.O.D.E. team is currently initiating meetings all around the National Capital Region for the Covid19 response action plan particularly in District I Valenzuela, District II Quezon City, District III San Juan, and District IV Las Pinas.

Marikina's mayor Marcelino Teodoro went on about their molecular and diagnostic laboratory for their testing capacity as well as the contact tracing measures that are in conjunction with ordinances and resolutions they implemented.

In Quezon City, they started the Mask Para sa Masa campaign which aims to give out face masks to the poor and vulnerable families all around the city. In addition to that, Mayor Joy Belmonte shared the 48 special concern lockdowns in high risk areas.

For the city of Pasay, they are doing "Active case finding" which is systematic screening and clinical evaluation for patients. This includes house to house symptom checking, house to house symptom check, immediate isolation for the sick and massive swab testing.

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

By: Nieza Mae Orpano



Coronavirus is a large family of viruses that range from mild sickness like cold to move serious illnesses like the MERS-CoV. Common characteristics of having this virus are mostly respiratory symptoms, and fever with shortness of breath, cough and breathing difficulties. More severe cases cause respiratory illnesses to develop like pneumonia, acute respiratory failure and in extreme cases, death.

One of the first case of the Covid19 virus on the country is a 5-year-old that traveled from Wuhan province in china. The child was experiencing the known symptoms like fever, throat irritation and bouts of coughing before landing at the Philippines. This case along with three other individuals were the first cases to be investigated by the DOH last January 2020 for the virus.

The DOH launched a 5-point strategy in hopes of restraining the spread of the virus and flattening the curve and that is to: 1. Increase Resilience, 2. Stop Transmission, 3. Reduce Contract Rate, 4. Shorten Duration of Infectiousness and 5) Enhance Quality, Consistency, and Affordability of Care Provision.

Around May of 2020, there are reports that the Covid-19 curve is starting to flatten with the help of DOH and LGU efforts as well as the Enhanced Community Quarantine that was imposed nationwide. The task of controlling the Covid 19 pandemic lied on the Interagency Agency Task Force in order to manage the resurgence of the Covid 19 virus strain.

Another action plan set place to counter the pandemic, is the BIDA solusyon with ear letter representing the proper protocol to follow: Bawal walang mask, Isanitize and kamay at Iwas hawak sa mga bagay, Dumistansya ng isang metro at Alamin ang totoong impormasyon. Various organizations partnered up with DOH and LGUs in order to implement this protocol which is highly effective in containing the spread of the infection.



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