

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MAY 29, 2009**

ON SCHOOL OPENING

Lapus asks DOH for update on Influenza A(H1N1) virus

Department of Education (DepEd) Secretary Jesli Lapus ordered Balik Eskwela Task Force chief Undersecretary Ramon Bacani to get an update from the Department of Health (DOH) on the Influenza A(H1N1) virus.

In a telephone conversation with Bacani at 4:00 pm today, DOH-National Epidemiology Center Director Dr. Eric Tayag said, "DOH Secretary Francisco Duque III is presently meeting with the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) and there is still no recommendation to postpone the opening of classes on June 1."

Lapus emphasized that DOH is the lead agency on this matter and DepEd is yielding to the health department's directive on whether or not classes are to be suspended because of this health concern.

"We have been working closely with the Department of Health, and based on their recommendation, there is no need to postpone the opening of classes because of this issue," Lapus said.

"At DepEd, we have also been actively promoting health education in our schools," he added. "And we are now implementing our own Anti-Influenza A(H1N1) campaign to make sure that all our field offices and schools are well informed of and well prepared for this health concern."

"While we are thankful for the concern expressed to us, we will follow the expert advice of the Department of Health," Lapus said. "The public can contact our Balik Eskwela Command Center or DOH for fresh updates on this matter in the coming days."

The public may forward their queries and complaints to DepEd through its Balik Eskwela Command Center Hotlines 6361663, 6331942, 6340222, 6359817, 6363602, 6364880, 6366550, 6387529, 6387530, 6387531 and 7065332. This center is open from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm.

The public may also contact DepEd through SMS by sending their name, address and query to 09194560027 or by texting DEPED FDBK name, address and query and sending it to 2622.

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