

PRESS RELEASE

Luistro to schools: intensify dengue prevention campaign

The Department of Education has enjoined its regional directors and division superintendents nationwide for a massive campaign against dengue even as the department goes full throttle in ensuring that all necessary measures are being undertaken to prevent students from contracting the dreaded disease.

The alarming development of dengue cases among the students has prompted DepEd Chief Armin Luistro to instruct all school officials to intensify anti-dengue campaigns to prevent further spread of the disease in schools. In a report from DepEd's Health and Nutrition Center (HNC), there are already 4,738 confirmed dengue cases in schools nationwide, where 58 students have died.

Luistro reiterates that the welfare of the students and the rest of the school community should be the priority. "We should work together to contain the outbreak of dengue. Students' welfare should be our primary concern," said Luistro.

HNC is health arm of Deped which constantly monitors dengue cases and possible outbreaks in schools. It closely coordinates with their local counterparts in the field offices.

Through DepEd Memo 377 series of 2010, the department supports the Department of Health's (DOH) intensive campaign against dengue. The memo is issued to reiterate and re-enforce previous memoranda on dengue to protect the school populace from this threatening disease especially during rainy season when "*aedes aegypti*" mosquito proliferates rapidly.

Luistro stressed the importance of the participation of everybody in the fight against dengue. "With everyone's support, the fight against dengue can be won," said Luistro.

Earlier, DepEd and Department of Health (DOH) had a series of school visits as part of the government's serious efforts to keep the schools and the rest of the community away from the possible threats of dengue.

DOH has come up with an extensive information communication campaign to fight dengue. Called 4S, it stands for search and destroy, self-protection measures, seek early consultation, and say "NO" to indiscriminate fogging. On the other hand, DepEd has also issued guidelines on the implementation of Preventive Alert System in Schools (PASS), a systematic relay of information on the child's or teacher's state of health to medical personnel/agencies in the locality which all school heads should follow.

Under PASS, pupils/students will observe the well-being of their own classmates and to report if someone among them is not feeling well or has colds/cough or fever. If confirmed, the principal shall notify the family/guardian of the sick child. If the school does not have a physician, the nearest health center physician/municipal health officer or rural health worker shall be consulted.

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In the memo, DepEd has lined up precautionary measures to prevent the schools from possible outbreak. School officials were ordered to mobilize all school personnel to disseminate information on the prevention and control of dengue. Close collaboration are being made with the Parents-Teachers-Community Associations (PTCAs), Local Government Units, and Municipal Health Offices on information campaign against dengue, maintenance of environmental sanitation in the schools and in the communities, and referral of pupils, students, and personnel with symptoms of dengue.

“We call on the parents, students, teachers, and school officials to be mindful of their health, take extra precaution, and to be watchful for any symptoms pointing to dengue to prevent outbreak,” said Luistro.

Answering the call of the secretary, field offices submitted reports on their own efforts to fight dengue outbreak. All of them continue to maintain sanitation in school premises and directed school health officials to conduct dengue information dissemination campaign in the entire community.

In DepEd Caraga, the region has fortified its effort to ward off dengue.

DepEd Caraga Director Dr. Gloria D. Benigno emphasized, “The most potent key to control diseases is to empower our people with correct information so they can take necessary action to stop the transmission through timely and vigilant health-seeking behaviors.”

Parents, teachers and school administrators listened to lectures/discussions on sanitation in relation to climate change and mosquito borne diseases which also include malaria, filariasis and dengue.

Meanwhile, CaLaBarZon step up its effort to educate the community on the nature of the disease and how to prevent it. In Sta. Rosa, the City Health Office is continuing its anti-dengue information drive, while search and destroy operations against mosquito breeding places are being undertaken. As part of the program, the Health and Nutrition Unit of the Department of Education-Division of Sta. Rosa City headed by their Medical Officer, Dr. Alain Paul B. Cabodil, monitored schools for breeding areas for mosquitoes. Possible breeding areas such as uncovered water containers, rainwater collection areas, and flower pots were removed or modified.

For information dissemination, a lecture on Dengue Prevention was held in Pulong Sta. Cruz Elementary School. Dr. Catherine Haynes, Sta. Rosa City Health Officer, was there to provide significant information and numerical data on the occurrence of Dengue in the city. Visual aids were used to demonstrate the disease process and manifestations of disease. Other schools were also given lectures. Fogging operations in schools were done on weekends so that no classes were disturbed.

Central Luzon reported that its school officials have been doing extensive information dissemination drive in schools, including parents to see to it that prevention is also done not only in schools but also at home. Health officials

also conduct school visits as part of their case monitoring in the area. Report from HNC showed that Central Luzon is among those with lowest number of dengue cases.

DepEd MiMaRoPa (Region IV-B) boasts off the support they have been getting from the local government units. “The efforts being undertaken by DepEd MiMaRoPa become easier because the local governments are our partners in the fight against dengue. Various initiatives are being implemented by school officials and so far, we are able to minimize dengue cases because of the all-out support from our local officials,” said Regional Director Dr. Luisa Yu.

In Quezon City, where dengue cases have increased tremendously, a “Dengue Buster Seminar” was conducted recently to increase awareness on the importance of cleanliness at home and in school. The campaign also destroyed the possible breeding places of mosquitoes and developed action plans on anti-dengue program in schools as part of the Dengue Buster Seminar.

Participants were Physical Education, Health Music (PEHM), Music, Arts, Physical Education and Health (MAPEH) and Science teachers, as well as student representatives, from all Quezon City public elementary and secondary schools. Also present were personnel from the Quezon City Health Department, some members of the Local School Board, Public Affairs and Information Services Office, MAPECON and the Medical Personnel of the Health and Nutrition Section headed by Medical Officer V Dr. Aurea Lopez of Quezon City Division.

Dr. Corazon C. Rubio, Officer-in-Charge – Schools Division Superintendent of Quezon City Division, was the keynote speaker to the event. Mayor Herbert Bautista was there to give an inspirational message to the participants and to lead the Oath of Commitment.

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