



News Release
5 September 2014

POEA reiterates advice on MERS-CoV

The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, an attached agency of the Department of Labor and Employment, yesterday reiterated its advice to overseas Filipino workers to take preventive measures against the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome-Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) following confirmation that a Filipina nurse from Saudi Arabia tested positive for the deadly virus.

Labor Secretary Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz said that while there is no travel restriction or deployment ban to Middle East countries relative to the MERS-CoV, overseas Filipino workers should take preventive measures against it.

In an earlier advisory, POEA Administrator Hans Leo J. Cacdac told OFWs working in the Middle East, including newly-hired and returning workers, to heed the following guidelines for their safety and protection:

1. Practice proper hand hygiene always, by washing your hands with soap or hand rubs with alcohol before and after eating; before and after handling, cooking and preparing food; after coughing, sneezing and using the toilets; and before and before and after touching animals.
2. Practice proper cough etiquette by covering your mouth and nose while sneezing or coughing. Use a facial tissue when coughing or sneezing and cover your mouth and nose with it. Dispose the tissue in a waste basket.
3. Avoid contact with farm and domesticated animals, including camels.
4. Avoid contact with sick or infected with MERS-CoV. If you have respiratory illness, stay home and wear a surgical mask to protect your family members.
5. If you are a health worker, strictly follow infection control protocols in your work.
6. Visit your doctor, a hospital or health facility immediately if symptoms of MERS-CoV manifest itself, including, persistent coughing, and other symptoms.

7. If you were in close contact with a confirmed MERS-CoV patient, comply with local health regulations and postpone any trip abroad until after test results are negative.
8. Practice healthy habits such as regular exercise, balanced and nutritional diet, and adequate sleep of at least eight (8) hours, as it would help strengthen the body's immunity.
9. Do not panic and believe rumors regarding MERS-CoV. Make sure information comes from relevant government authority.

Cacdac said that for returning OFWs, especially those from MERS-CoV affected country or countries, the DOH advises them to do the following:

1. Monitor your health for at least fourteen (14) days.
2. Should you develop signs and symptoms (fever, headache, sore throat, body weakness, cough, difficulty of breathing, unexplained bruising or bleeding, severe diarrhea), cover your mouth and nose with a piece of cloth, handkerchief, or surgical mask to prevent spread of infection.
3. You may call any of the following numbers:

Bureau of Quarantine:
Tel. No. (632) 320-9101
(632) 320-9107

OPCEN-HEMS
Tel. Nos. +63 922-884-1564
+63 920-949-8419
+63 915-772-5621

National Epidemiology Center (NEC)
Department of Health (DOH)
Tel. No. (632) 743-1937

He also advised recruitment agencies of OFWs to conduct special briefings on precautionary measures against MERS-COV for their recruited workers. The recruitment agencies are further enjoined to report to the DOH any MERS-CoV case affecting their deployed workers.

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