

News Release

17 February 2015

POEA to OFWs: Take preventive measures against MersCov

Administrator Hans Leo J. Cacdac has issued Advisory No. 2, Series of 2015, reiterating preventive measures issued last year to ensure the protection of overseas Filipino workers against Mers-Cov or the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome-Corona Virus.

Labor Secretary Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz directed the POEA to reissue the advisories as a Filipino nurse tested positive for Mers-Cov early this month.

In the recirculated advisory, POEA Administrator Hans Leo J. Cacdac urged OFWs, especially those in the Middle East countries, to heed the following 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.

Cacad also advised OFWs returning from a country affected by MERS-CoV 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 required licensed recruitment agencies deploying health care workers to the Middle East to conduct special briefings on precautionary measures against MERS-COV and monitor the status of the deployed workers in their respective workplaces.

Cacadac also instructed the recruitment agencies to report to the Office of the Deputy Administrator for Welfare and Employment of the POEA any MERS-CoV case involving their workers.

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