PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS OFFICE
News and Information Bureau

PUBLIC BRIEFING #LagingHandaPH
HOSTED BY PCOO SECRETARY MARTIN ANDANAR
AND PCOO UNDERSECRETARY ROCKY IGNACIO
SEPTEMBER 11, 2020 (11:02 A.M. – 12:00 NN)

SEC. ANDANAR: Magandang umaga, Pilipinas. Ngayong Biyernes muling makibahagi sa paghahanap ng mga solusyon sa mga problema dala ng COVID-19 sa ating bansa. Good morning, Rocky.

USEC. IGNACIO: Good morning, Secretary Andanar. Sasamahan tayo siyempre ng mga kawani ng pamahalaan para sa makabuluhang talakayan. Ako po si Usec. Rocky Ignacio.

SEC. ANDANAR: Ako po naman si Secretary Martin Andanar at ito ang Public Briefing #LagingHandaPH.

Upang sumagot sa mga tanong ng bayan, maya-maya lang makakasama natin sa programa sina Jail Chief Inspector Xavier Solda, Spokesperson ng Bureau of Jail Management and Penology; Bacolod City Mayor Evelio Leonardia.

USEC. IGNACIO: Samantala makakasama rin natin sa paghahatid ng ulat ang mga PTV correspondents mula sa iba't ibang probinsiya. Samantala para naman po sa inyong mga katanungan, maaari kayong mag-comment sa live streaming ng ating programa sa PTV Facebook page.

Samantala una sa ating mga balita, bumisita at nagpamahagi ang tanggapan ni Senator Bong Go sa mga biktima ng sunog sa Malabon at Metro Manila. Tinatayang aabot sa tatlong daang residente ng Sta. Cruz, Manila ang nabigyan ng masks, medicine packs, food packs at cash assistance. Nagbigay naman ng bisikleta sa mga poorest of the poor at motorcycle barriers para naman sa piling motorcycle riders. Dagdag pa diyan, nagpaabot din ng tulong ang DSWD sa pamamagitan ng Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation Program at maging ang DTI at NHA ay nakibahagi sa pagtulong.

Samantala, nabigyan din ng tulong ang tatlumpu't anim na residente sa Sampaloc, Manila at mahigit apatnaraan naman sa Tugatog, Malabon na kapwa rin nasunugan. Sa kabilang banda, siniguro ng senador na ang naging distribution ay sumunod sa strict health protocols na ipinatutupad ng pamahalaan bilang pag-iwas sa pagkalat ng COVID-19. Paalala naman ni Senator Bong Go sa mga barangay officials na dapat aniya nagpapatuloy ang delivery ng critical public services sa kabila po ng kinakaharap nating crisis sa ngayon.

Samantala sa iba pang balita, sa naganap na Development Budget Coordinating Council briefing kahapon, kinumusta ni Senator Bong Go ang estado ng ilang mga programa at proyekto kagaya ng E-Governance Act of 2020, National ID, Universal Healthcare Law, Health Facilities Enhancement Program, Build, Build, Build at ang CHEd at ang DepEd learning programs. Aniya, dapat ang layunin sa magiging budget para sa taong 2021 ay hindi lamang mapagtagumpayan ang pandemic kundi maging handa at mas maging mabilis ang tugon sa alin mang health crisis na maaaring kaharapin ng bansa. Ayon naman sa mga ahensiyang kasali sa nasabing briefing, umuusad ang mga programa at proyekto ng ating pamahalaan at may nakalaan ding budget para dito.

Samantala, suportado naman ni Senator Bong Go ang bagong bersiyon ng Coco Levy Bill na pinagdiskusyunan sa senate plenary. Nais aniya ng senador na maging co-author ng nasabing measure. Ang bill na ito ay naglalayong makapag-provide ng gagamiting pondo para sa mga magsasaka sa bansa. Ayon naman kay Senator Cynthia Villar, minimum of 5 billion pesos ang budget para matulungan ang mga nangangailangang farmers sa bansa at para rin aniya mapatunayan na kayang ipatupad ng Philippine Coconut Authority ang ganitong programa.

SEC. ANDANAR: Para po naman alamin ang sitwasyon ng Persons Deprived of Liberty at mga ginagawang hakbang ng BJMP para labanan ang COVID-19 sa loob ng mga bilangguan, makakausap natin si Jail Chief Inspector Xavier Solda, Spokesperson ng BJMP. Magandang umaga po sa inyo, sir.

J/CINSP. SOLDA: Sec. Martin and Usec. Rocky magandang umaga po.

SEC. ANDANAR: Ano po ba ang kasalukuyang sitwasyon ngayon sa BJMP kaugnay sa COVID-19? Ilan po ba ang cases dito at ano po ang kalagayan nila ngayon?

J/CINSP. SOLDA: Well, patuloy po na nagsisipag iyong ating mga Jail Officers sa lahat ng mga district, city and municipal jail sa bansa sa pangunguna ng ating Chief BJMP, si Jail Director Allan S. Iral. Good news po, mayroon na lamang po tayong 175 active cases mula po iyan sa naitalang 1,151 wherein 980 na po ang naka-recover. Mataas nga po ang kanilang recovery rate, halos nasa 80% kaya naman patuloy na nagsisipag iyong ating mga doktor, jail nurses, nagbibigay ng 24/7 na more focused medical care and of course iyong pag-o-observe po ng mga precautionary measures sa mga jail facilities po natin.

And Sec. Martin, tuluy-tuloy po nag-expand iyong ating electronic dalaw kasi temporarily suspended po iyong visitation sa mga jail facilities natin. Mahalaga po sa BJMP iyong papel ng kanilang mga kapamilya kaya tinutulungan po natin sila na maka-establish pa rin ng pag-uusap, ng kumustahan sa mga jail facilities natin. And iyon pong ating telemedicine with support po ng ating Directorate for Health Service at ng Department of Health, nagtutulung-tulong upang matutukan po iyong kalagayan ng mga pasyente natin.

Sec. Martin, iyong atin naman pong mga PDL kapag may COVID-19-like symptoms pa lang – ubo, sipon – naka-isolate na po kaagad iyan at mino-monitor po ng ating mga health personnel.

SEC. ANDANAR: Saan po dinadala ang mga PDLs na nagpopositibo sa COVID-19 at ano po ang protocols ninyo para hindi kumalat ang COVID-19 sa loob ng mga kulungan?

J/CINSP. SOLDA: Well, kapag po ang pasyente 'no ay nag-manifest pa lang ng COVID-19-like symptoms, ina-isolate na po natin iyan. Ang mabuti pong ginagawa ng ating mga jail facilities, mayroon po tayong health monitoring sa lahat po ng mga PDL natin partikular iyon pong tinatawag na mga vulnerable ano – ito po iyong may mga pre-medical conditions, iyong mga senior citizens, so nakatutok po tayo sa kanila.

At ang BJMP naman po nag-establish ng Ligtas COVID centers doon sa mga priority areas natin. Ibig sabihin, ito po iyong may pinakamaraming kaso. Mayroon po tayong anim 'no na na-establish na mga Ligtas COVID centers at doon po natin sila dinadala. Ngayon po kung severe naman ang symptoms, definitely po iko-coordinate po natin sa korte para dalhin po sila sa mga hospitals na doon mas matututukan iyong kanilang kondisyon.

Ang buong puwersa naman po ng BJMP ay mahigpit na nagpapatupad ng mga precautionary measures sa jail facilities natin to prevent the further spread ng COVID-19 lalo na po doon sa mga infected na facilities po natin na which currently 'no, around—nasa 21 facilities lamang po out of 470 jail facilities. Kaya ito po iyong tinututukan ng BJMP na masiguro na ma-zero na po natin in time at iyan po ay dahil din sa pagtutulung-tulong ng iba't ibang ahensiya ng gobyerno para mag-extend ng tulong po doon sa mga pasyente natin sa mga jail facilities.

SEC. ANDANAR: Paano ninyo po ina-address ang problema ng congestion sa mga bilangguan ngayong napakaimportante ng physical distancing para malabanan po ang COVID-19?

J/CINSP. SOLDA: Ay tama po Sec. Martin, medyo malaking challenge po talaga iyong physical distancing sa mga jail facilities natin, lalo na po doon sa mga congested jail sa mga highly urbanized areas. Kaya po ang ginagawa ng BJMP is of course iyong pag-observe po ng mga precautionary measures and of course to educate iyong mga PDL po natin, they have access sa media 'no, nakakapanood po sila ng TV, ng radyo so nabibigyan din po sila ng mga important information on how they could protect themselves on top of the efforts iyong mga wardens natin sa mga jail units.

But of course Sec. Martin nakikita rin natin, importante na ma-decongest iyong mga jail facilities natin kaya naman nakatutok kami doon sa paralegal support services natin and iyong coordination natin sa mga korte lalo na doon sa mga vulnerable PDL na ma-fast track po iyong mga kaso nila. At tinututukan din po natin iyong infrastructure programs ng agency. Nagpapasalamat po kami sa national government sa pinakamalaking tulong na na-receive ng agency. For the last 3 years ano, mayroon po tayong almost 7 billion para po sa pagpapatayo ng mga karagdagang facilities natin, unprecedented po iyan.

At sabi nga po ng aming Chief BJMP sa ating mga regional directors ito iyong tutukan natin para masiguro na hindi lamang ma-decongest iyong mga jail facilities natin, matulungan po natin iyong ating mga PDL.

SEC. ANDANAR: Kumusta po ang mga BJMP facilities na under construction, kailan po ang target completion at paano po ninyo ito mino-monitor?

J/CINSP. SOLDA: Well, doon po sa mga priority facilities natin para po sa kaalaman ng publiko, ang ginagawa po ng BJMP hindi lamang siya basta nagtatayo ng mga jail facility sa mga probinsya o mga lugar na kung saan mayroong kailangang itayo na mga jail facilities.

Tinitingnan natin ano po ba iyong pinaka-congested, doon po ang inuuna natin na mapagtayuan. Ang ating Directorate for Logistics siya naman ang tumututok sa pakikipag-coordinate sa mga local government units at doon na rin sa mga contractors para ma-fast track po iyong pagtapos nitong mga proyektong ito.

Though we understand in some areas, mayroong unworkable weather conditions, but we have to continue monitoring it. Kasi nga po Sec. Martin, because of the importance ng mga infrastructures projects natin, bumuo po ang BJMP ng National Project Monitoring Team para tumutok, i-monitor po itong mga proyekto na ito, alamin kung ano iyong mga concerns para po madali nating ma-address at madali rin pong ma-fast track iyong pagtapos ng mga proyekto po na ito.

And, ang atin naman pong mga contractors, continuous po iyong coordination natin sa kanila para rin po sila mag-effort sila na matapos as scheduled ito pong mga proyekto po na ito.

SEC. ANDANAR: Sinisiguro ang kaligtasan ng mga PDLs laban sa COVID-19. May sapat na supply po ba silang hygiene materials; ano po ba ang mga hakbang ninyo ukol dito?

J/CINSP. SOLDA: Well unang-una po Sec. Martin, tuluy-tuloy iyong pagtutok ng BJMP dito po sa mga pasyente natin among our PDLs. We coordinated with the Department of Health and doon po sa mga partner agencies natin sa mga pangangailangan lalo na po sa mga hygiene materials. Mayroon naman pong pondong nakalaan ang BJMP para sa mga ito, iyong pambili po ng mga disinfectants, kasi continuous po iyong disinfection ng mga jail facilities natin at nakikipag-coordinate din po kami sa Department of Health at sa iba pang mg partners natin.

In fact, sa kabuuan po mayroon po tayong more than 100 million na-receive na rin na mga donations from different partners para tulungan na rin kami and both po items in goods ito para masiguro na protektado po iyong mga PDL natin.

And Sec. Martin, doon po sa jail facilities natin na may kakayahan, iyong atin pong mga PDL mismo nagtatahi na rin sila ng mga face mask, nagpa-fabricate sila ng mga face shields at in

fact iyong iba po sa kanila nakakapag-extend nga rin ng tulong doon sa kanilang respective communities.

Ang mahalaga po dito, nakita natin na sa pagtutulungan po ng iba't ibang ahensiya ng gobyerno matutukan ito pong pangangailangan ng mga Persons Deprived of Liberty natin; malaki po ang naibaba 'no ng bilang ng mga kaso at mataas po iyong ating recovery rate. In fact, nasa 80% and mayroon na lamang po tayong 175 actives cases. And we are hoping in the coming days, wala na pong madagdag at tuluy-tuloy na pong ma-zero natin until fully recovered iyon pong ating mga pasyente.

SEC. ANDANAR: Naka-apekto po ba ang COVID-19 situation sa quarantine measures po ng programa po ng BJMP para sa PDLs. Paano po ninyo sinisiguro na patuloy pa rin ang mga ito sa kabila ng mga nararanasan natin?

J/CINSP. SOLDA: Ang ginawa po kasi ng BJMP ano po, as early as March 20, nag-declare na po tayo ng total jail lockdown. Ibig sabihin, temporarily suspended muna iyong face to face visitation natin and of course we have to discuss this with the PDL and sa kanilang mga families. And nakita naman natin, na-prevent talaga natin iyong pag-spread ng virus sa loob ng mga facilities natin.

Iyong pagbibigay po ng national government at ng mga partner agencies nito ng tamang information sa publiko malaki po ang naitulong nito. Kaya iyon po, isa iyon sa nakita natin na dahilan kung bakit natutukan natin ng maigi iyon pong sitwasyon ng ating mga jail facilities.

And Sec. Martin, as far as the BJMP is concerned naman po, iyong ating mga jail personnel tuluy-tuloy sa paghihigpit sa pagpapatupad ng mga precautionary measures natin sa jail facilities natin upang matulungan po iyong ating mga PDL na hindi na sila makapag-contract nitong virus na ito at magtuloy-tuloy naman iyong paggaling sa parte noong ating mga pasyente. Tuluy-tuloy din naman po ang pakikipagtulungan natin sa mga local government units.

SEC. ANDANAR: Ano naman po ang mga ginagawa ninyong hakbang para masiguro din ang safety ng mga jail officers ngayon; may mga nagpositibo po ba sa kanilang hanay at kumusta po ba ang kalagayan nila?

J/CINPS. SOLDA: Well, as far as the BJMP officers are concerned tuluy-tuloy po iyong binibigay nating paalala sa kanila. In fact, we have issued series of advisories. We have 46 series of COVID-19 advisories para po sa mga personnel natin at PDL upang sila iyong manguna sa pagpapakita ng disiplina at nang ma-prevent natin iyong pagdadala ng virus sa loob ng mga jail facilities natin.

Ang atin naman pong mga kasamahan, nalulungkot po tayo, kasi nagkaroon po tayo ng mga apat na casualty among them and ito po ay dahil sa pagsisikap nila na mabantayan iyong mga jail facilities natin eh may mga pre-medical conditions ito. Sila na po iyong tinamaan ng sakit.

But good thing po tumaas naman iyong recovery rate natin. Sa kasalukuyan po, among our personnel, nasa around 65% iyong recovery rate natin and we are hoping na sana gumaling naman the soonest time possible iyong atin pong mga kasamahan. Ang advise lang naman natin sa kanila is of course i-observe iyong mga precautionary measures na in-establish din ng national government kagaya ng pagsusuot ng face mask, iyong physical distancing and of course iyong pagpapalakas ng katawan para po lumakas iyong resistensiya nila at malabanan itong virus na ito.

SEC. ANDANAR: Tungkol naman po sa panukalang batas na ilipat sa BJMP ang control ng provincial jails. Ano po ba ang magiging impact nito sa management ng mga nasabing jail facilities at ano po ang tugon ninyo sa mga grupong umaalma rito?

J/CINPS. SOLDA: Well unang-una, Sec. Martin, dapat pong maintindihan ng mga kababayan natin na itong provincial jails at ang BJMP under po kami pareho ng DILG. Nasa isang batas po iyan kaya nga lang magkahiwalay po ng administration, dahil ang provincial jail is under the provincial government at ang BJMP naman po iyon po ang mina-manage natin, iyong mga district city and municipal jails.

Panahon na rin po kasi na magkaroon po tayo ng standard management ng mga jail facilities natin. Ang nais po nating gawin, tulungan iyong ating mga provincial governors sa pagma-manage ng mga jail facilities nila na mag-extend ang BJMP ng karanasan kung papaano mas matutulungan pagdating sa reformation and rehabilitation programs, pagdating sa records managements, sa pag-strengthen ng security ng facility mahalagang factor po kasi ito.

Tutal nasa interior sector po kami lahat, maganda po na mapag-isa na lang natin para mayroon po tayong standards sa management ng mga jail facilities po natin. On top of that, pareho po kasi ng mga ongoing iyong mga trial o hindi pa naman to napatunayang nagkasala. So iyon pong approach, iyong pagma-manage pagdating sa mga programa sa mga districts, city ad municipal jails natin pati na rin po sa provincial jails mapag-isa po natin.

Doon naman po sa mga umaalmang grupo sa pag-i-integrate po ng provincial jails sa BJMP naiintindihan po natin iyong sentimyento nila, pero I'm quite certain na nakikita nila iyong importansiya o iyong halaga na magkaroon po ng isang standard lang sa pagma-manage ng mga jail facilities natin. At doon po sa mga umaalma, marahil iyong iba nag-aalala po sila dahil ano po ang mangyayari na sa trabaho nila.

Ang BJMP naman po basta qualified ka maaari naman po silang i-absorb ng agency natin. Ang kailangan lang naman po ay, of course, may appropriate eligibility ka. Hindi naman po kaagad iyan tatanggalin po sila kasi bibigyan naman po sila ng sapat na panahon para makapag-comply doon sa mga eligibility requirements nila.

Ang direction po ng BJMP sa integration ng provincial jail, sa management po nito ay basically para tulungan po ang mga provincial government natin, magkaisa po sa isang standard na pamamahala ng mga jail facilities po natin.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Sir, good morning po. Bigyan-daan lang po muna natin iyong katanungan ng kasamahan natin sa media. Mula po kay Kenneth Paciente ng PTV: Ilan na daw po iyong napalayang vulnerable PDLs sa lahat ng jail facility na sakop po ng BJMP?

J/CINSP. SOLDA: Thank you, ma'am Rocky. Well, Kenneth, sa kasalukuyan mayroon tayong napalaya na 1,501 na vulnerables, ito iyong mga elderly, sick and pregnant. Mayroon po tayong 560 na elderlies; 909 na sick PDLs, ito iyong may mga malubhang sakit, may pre-medical conditions; and then mayroon din pong 32 na mga pregnant PDL na napalaya po natin. Sa tulong po ito ng Office of the Court Administrator. They tapped the trial courts para ma-fast track po iyong mga kaso nitong mga vulnerable PDLs.

And ito po nakikita natin na lahat po ng mga ahensiya ng gobyerno nagtutulong-tulong upang mapadali po ang kaso nitong mga vulnerable PDL natin at hindi na po sila maging biktima ng COVID-19 sa mga jail facilities natin.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Sir, salamat po. Ano na lang po ang mensahe ninyo sa ating mga manonood ngayon?

J/CINSP. SOLDA: Well, sa ating mga kababayan, lalo na po sa mga pamilya ng PDL, makakaasa po kayo na ang buong pamunuan ng BJMP ay ginagawa po ang lahat ng makakaya nito upang tugunan iyong pangangailangan po ng mga PDL natin sa loob ng mga district, city and municipal jails natin.

At nagpapasalamat din po tayo sa mga tumutulong na iba't-ibang ahensiya ng gobyerno, lalo na po ang Department of Health na nakatutok po sa amin. Sabi nga po ni Secretary Eduardo Año, ay ganito po talaga ang trabaho ng nasa public service, kailangan nating magtulungan upang masiguro na maprotektahan po iyong mga kababayan nating nasa loob ng kulungan.

USEC. IGNACIO: Okay. Maraming salamat po sa inyong panahon, Jail Chief Inspector Xavier Solda. Stay safe po.

J/CINSP. SOLDA: Maraming salamat din po. Magandang umaga.

USEC. IGNACIO: Samantala, isinailalim pong muli sa MECQ ang Bacolod City simula noong September 8 dahil po sa patuloy na pagtaas ng kaso doon. At para po pag-usapan ang mga ginagawang hakbang ng lokal na pamahalaan ng lungsod para po labanan ang COVID-19, makakausap po natin si Bacolod City Mayor Evelio Leonardia.

Good morning po, Mayor!

MAYOR LEONARDIA: Good morning Usec. Rocky, good morning Secretary Martin, good morning Philippines!

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Sir, ano na po muna iyong update tungkol po sa COVID cases sa Bacolod City at kumusta na po iyong pagpapatupad po ng MECQ sa inyong siyudad?

MAYOR LEONARDIA: Maybe we should start by my report that as of yesterday, we already have 2,221 cases and recoveries as much as 1,054 and active is 1,124. So, it's practically a 50/50 situation although largely because these are new cases. Because if you go back to our history since March, we were having a very peaceful time here so to speak. March, April, May, June… May for example, we only had one or two cases for the whole month but all of a sudden at the end of July things just changed so drastically and we found ourselves in the midst of these numbers.

So, we feel that it all started because of the entry of the LSIs and OFWs, that's when we started to catch fire. But the thing is, as soon as it hit to our thickly populated areas and workplaces, then the exponential nature of COVID once again show its 'sunny face' and that is where we are now. Nevertheless, we are happy that the President Rody Duterte and Senator Bong Go responded to our plea for help very, very quickly. And Secretary Roy Cimatu himself came to Bacolod and with the Presidential Assistant for the Visayas, Secretary Mike Dino. They came with General Mel Feliciano and his wife Mia and I can—she's a separate story by himself, I can talk about him more, later. And of course, Secretary Charlie Galvez has been very concerned and very attentive to us and it was no less than Executive Secretary Medialdea who broke the news to me that this team is coming.

Now, what has changed the picture for us is these people coming here because with their reputation, because we know that this is exactly the same thing team that went to Cebu at the height of the crisis and I know, we know here in Bacolod that they were a success story. I was informed that when they went to Cebu, Cebu was in that situation where they were having as much as 350 cases in a day, that high. But when they left and by now, Cebu is just having that low - single digit case index.

So, even last night, we had a long meeting with our barangay captains together with General Mel Feliciano and it has been emphasized to the barangays, especially. It was Secretary Roy Cimatu himself who started to make it very clear to all of us that the fight now is in the barangays. And we feel that with their guidance a lot can be done here. Like for example, because of the recommendation of General Mel Feliciano, we created the new Bacolod emergency operation center which integrated, collated and coordinated all our buddies that are involved in this COVID fight.

And because of that, we feel that in terms of data management, telemed, logistics and instruction and – I will go to the point of, to that subject matter of contact tracing in a little bit – it has [unclear]. We're happy that General Feliciano is happy here with the way things are moving and the way things are progressing. But of course, he was quite optimistic but I believe this should be some kind of a guarded optimism situation because, of course, when General Feliciano last night was explaining to us that this could happen and this will happen

and he was quite optimistic about the situation in Bacolod, we told the barangay captains also, of course, that can happen if we all work together.

So, overall, we are being guided by these experts, these experienced people and you know, we are amazed with the way—with the dedication and commitment that General Feliciano has given to us because you know, every day he crisscrosses Iloilo and Bacolod. He would have his lunch here, go to Iloilo overnight then come back to Bacolod the following day and he has been doing that for two weeks now. And we're happy that he's happy with what is happening also in Bacolod.

So, we know that this… we're facing probably our biggest challenge ever as a city and as we talk about our resiliency as a people but this is quite a very, very big concern. But we brace ourselves that while we will probably have to face the storm, we know that in the end, resilient that we are, we will survive this and we're just happy, we're inspired that the national government, with no less than the President, Senator Bong Go and ES Medialdea had been very supportive and if we can work together with their guidance and with their support, I feel that we will have a good chance of beating COVID-19.

USEC. IGNACIO: Opo. Mayor, you said that iyong one of yung major causes po ng pagtaas ng COVID sa lungsod is iyong pagdating po ng LSIs. So, ano po iyong measures na ginawa ng inyong lungsod para po maiwasan po ang pagtaas pa?

MAYOR LEONARDIA: Well, right now, we are concentrating on contact tracing and may I share it to the public that no less that Contact Tracing Czar of the Philippines came here, Mayor Benjie Magalong. He talked to those contact tracers who went into a seminar with the people or the personnel of General Mel Feliciano. About 200 of them started that seminar and according to Mayor Benjie, the ideal ratio should be 1:8 or every 800 people in Bacolod there should be one and that is 787.

We even gotten a number bigger than that but of course, we agreed that we must still continue to train so many of them but what is also very—what we'd like to appreciate about the efforts of the team that the President has sent us is that Mayor Benjie Magalong after the seminar with the contact tracer even sat down with us, the City officials, and our meeting and with a lecture from him lasted even beyond midnight the other day.

So, with a more efficient contact tracing system and Benjie was happy that what he saw before and what he saw now is an improvement.

We hope that we will be able to identify where is the virus and consequently we will be able to contain it because we had in fact a mass testing we did about a week ago which where—you know, with Congressman Benitez and Governor Bong Lacson and we were able to swab 4,384 of our people and with a prevalence rate of 12.11% percent it meant that 531 were discovered positive. So, if you look at our figures of 2,221 now, particularly 1/4 of that is a product of that mass testing.

So, of course, people are debating about it of whether that was the right strategy or not but we believe that it's better—we're better off if we know who they are where they are than to allow these people to be roaming around the city and doing harm and damage to all of us and I feel this is a major consideration and that coupled with our concentration on the barangays, we hope to catch up.

Of course, as I said, given that this team of General Feliciano was a success in Cebu, we are quite optimistic that if we can somehow follow most of them of not all because not everything will be applied as what is—it's not a formula that fits exactly the same in every place. So, we feel that we have a better chance of fighting this now.

USEC. IGNACIO: Okay. Mayor, alam naman po natin na biglaan po daw iyong pagpapatupad ng MECQ sa Bacolod City and allegedly hindi daw po nakapaghanda iyong mga residente sa three-week lockdown. So, how did you address this, Mayor?

MAYOR LEONARDIA: Okay. Actually, for quite some time the doctors particularly the infectious disease doctors in Bacolod have been asking for what they call a timeout. Some of them were asking for ECQ and it went up to the level of the President and the IATF; some of them were asking for MECQ. So as a result of a series of meetings we had, normal meetings at that, there are meetings that lasted 5-6-7 hours together with not only our city officials but the Church leaders, our business community, our malls.

We had already decided beforehand that we should institute our own local initiatives to strengthen our restrictions and before that proclamation came, we were able to pass an ordinance in Bacolod that instituted the HQS or the home quarantine system and the other one is the border control.

Now, the home quarantine system is patterned after that HQS system that when we had ECQ but to further substantially cut the number of people around the city, the rule is we will only allow one in every household and not only that, we are also having that odd-even scheme which means that if your number ends which is odd, then you can only leave your residence Monday, Wednesday, Friday; if you're even then you are allowed Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. And every Sunday we call it lockdown Sunday.

We've had lockdown Sundays before especially during the ECQ times and every time we hold lockdown Sunday, it's really a… Bacolod is turned into a ghost town and even last Sunday again we did it and people cooperated. So, with the support and cooperation of people, and of course we know that we still have to continuously intensify this and in fact this is one of the subject matters we thoroughly discussed last night together with the barangay captains is what police presence or even the presence of the Army because we feel that we still have to tighten the implementation of our minimum health protocols.

Although for the record, our local PNP since we started with curfew, face mask and social distancing and all these which incidentally had become already—are now in a form of ordinances, the police office in Bacolod had already apprehended about 18,000 and according to our City Director Colonel Henry Binas, the trend is that… it's getting… the numbers are getting lower and lower and that means more and more people now are complying with our minimum health standards.

USEC. IGNACIO: Mayor, we understand na isa daw po sa critical na kalagayan ng lungsod iyong estado po ng healthcare facilities. So, kumusta na po ang sitwasyon dito ngayon?

MAYOR LEONARDIA: Okay. May I just go back a little better question I forgot to say that—actually, in this particular case, we were used to that system where we were being informed about our quarantine status on a 15-day basis; but this one was different. We were told that we will be under MECQ only last September 7 and it was late in the evening when we learned about that.

So, quite naturally, people were surprised, some people were confused and there was some degree of inconvenience but of course police was somehow realistic and more understanding during the first day but after that, we were more strict in the regulations to implement MECQ, so that is how it is now.

Now, going to the facilities, in Bac0lod we have 1,276-beds in seven hospitals and all of that, 246 has been allotted for COVID cases. But while we have 246 for COVID cases, only about 131 of that are being used. Not because we lack rooms but more so because we lack the health workers. Like in many other places here in the country today, a number of our health workers are under quarantine because they were infected. Then a number of them had resigned; a number of them went on AWOL; and many—

We have had those experiences where we are trying to recruit health workers and we have an initial yes, but later they changed their minds, because they don't want to endanger their families and so on forth. So, that is why we ask also for report and incidentally, the Central Command on the Visayas headed by General Robert Ancan had sent us an initial batch of 12 health workers from the Philippine Army and we have that arrangement with Secretary Charlie Galvez that if the budget coming from the Bayanihan 2 is in place. We were asking that we be given some priority in so far as the distribution of this personnel that may be hired by the national government. Kung puwede, mabigyan kami ng enough to answer the situation here. Which as I said, is not as much as a question of the number of health workers but it's more of the issue of having to have more or having enough health workers to run the facilities that we have.

USEC. IGNACIO: Mayor, kunin ko na lang po, do you have message po sa iyong mga kababayan sa Bacolod City?

MAYOR LEONARDIA: Well, first thank you once again sa inyo ni Secretary Martin and for giving me this chance to connect with our people who are not here and who could not come here, because, in fact, we have a pending request to the IATF and be granted the moratorium on the acceptance of the LSIs, because we want our quarantine and isolation facilities be cleared up in after a week or two, we believed, that we will have more space for them and we can normalize. So, our people are aware by now that we are facing our greatest challenge ever.

I believed that in this century, in the history most are written, this will be among the highlights of what happened in this century and Bacolod, our area here had gone too many crisis in the past, sugar crisis, tragedies. I have to tell this, even our Maskara Festival is a product of our resiliency as a people.

So we believed that all these will also pass, this is serious, this is heavy for us. But we feel that in the end we will survive this and we will somehow cross the tunnel. With the presence of the team that the President sent to us, we feel that we have the seen the light at the end of the tunnel. But of course, it's a question of when do we get there. But we are pretty sure that we are moving towards it. And we would continuously ask for the support, the aid of the national government. We would like to thank President Duterte, Senator Bong Go and Executive Secretary Medialdea, Secretary Charlie Galvez, Secretary Roy Cimatu, Secretary Mike Dino, General (unclear) and his wife who had dedicated the—you know, who are that amazing and they have been a source of inspiration for us. And we believed in them, because, well they have their credentials, they are success story in Cebu. And we feel that we will also have chance of succeeding here and in the end the people in Bacolod will always be resilient and we know in the end, we will survive.

SEC. ANDANAR: Okay, maraming salamat po, Bacolod City Mayor Evelio Leonardia. Stay safe, Mayor.

MAYOR LEONARDIA: Same to you, Usec. Rocky and also Secretary Martin. Please stay safe, maayong aga sa inyo nga duwa. Thank you.

USEC. IGNACIO: Samantala upang bigyang daan ang Hatid Tulong Program na layong mapauwi po ang mga na-stranded sa Maynila dahil sa umiiral na community quarantine, pansamantala munang ipinagpaliban ang Balik Probinsya Bagong Pag-asa Program. Para sa iba pang detalye panoorin po natin ito.

(VTR)

SEC. ANDANAR: Puntahan naman natin si Breves Bulsao mula sa PTV Cordillera.

(NEWS REPORTING)

SEC. ANDANAR: Maraming salamat Breves Bulsao.

USEC. IGNACIO: Mula naman sa PTV Davao may ulat si Jay Lagang, Jay?

(NEWS REPORTING)

USEC. IGNACIO: Maraming salamat sa iyo, Jay Lagang ng PTV-Davao.

SEC. ANDANAR: Mula sa PTV-Davao magtungo naman tayo sa PTV Cebu; may ulat po si John Aroa.

(NEWS REPORTING)

SEC. ANDANAR: Maraming salamat, John Aroa.

USEC. IGNACIO: Samantala, dumako naman tayo sa update kaugnay sa COVID-19 cases sa buong bansa.

Base po sa tala ng Department of Health as of September 10, 2020, umabot na po sa 248,947 ang total number of confirmed cases; naitala ang 3,821 new COVID-19 cases. Naitala din kahapon ang 80 na katao po na nasawi kaya umabot na sa 4,066 cases ang kabuuang bilang ng COVID-19 deaths sa ating bansa. Ngunit patuloy rin naman ang pagdami ng mga nakaka-recover na umakyat na sa 186,058 with 563 new recoveries recorded as of yesterday. Ang kabuuang total ng active cases po ay 58,823.

Samantala, tulad ng ating araw-araw na paalala, maging BIDA Solusyon sa laban kontra COVID-19. Ugaliin po ang pagsusuot ng face mask, dahil sa pamamagitan nito ay napipigilan po ang pagkalat ng droplets mula sa inyong bibig at ilong. Nababawasan din nito ng 67% ang chance na makahawa at mahawa ng sakit. At bukod sa ating kaligtasan, ang pagsusuot po ng mask ay nagpapakita rin ng respeto at courtesy sa mga taong ating nakakasalamuha. Simpleng paraan lang po iyan, pero malaki ang maitutulong para labanan ang COVID-19.

SEC. ANDANAR: Para po sa inyong katanungan at concern tungkol sa COVID-19, maari po ninyong i-dial ang 02-89426843; para po naman sa Smart, PLDT and Sun subscribers, i-dial po ang 1555. Patuloy rin kayong makibalita sa pinagkakatiwalaang sources ng impormasyon tungkol sa COVID-19, maari po ninyong bisitahin ang covid19.gov.ph.

At iyan nga ang mga balitang nakalap namin ngayong araw na ito. Maraming salamat po sa mga naglaan ng kani-kanilang oras sa pagbibigay linaw sa mga impormasyon na mahalagang malaman ng ating mga kababayan.

USEC. IGNACIO: Ang Public Briefing po ay hatid sa inyo ng iba't-ibang sangay ng Presidential Communications Operations Office sa pakikipagtulungan ng Department of Health at kaisa ng mga Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas o KBP.

SEC. ANDANAR: Asahan po ninyo ang aming patuloy na pagbibigay impormasyon kaugnay sa mga update sa ating paglaban sa COVID-19 pandemic. Maraming salamat sa Filipino Sign Language Access Team for COVID-19.

USEC. IGNACIO: Mula po sa Presidential Communications Operations Office, ako po si USec. Rocky Ignacio.

SEC. ANDANAR: Mula rin po sa PCOO, ako po naman si Secretary Martin Andanar. Magkita-kita po tayo muli bukas dito lang sa Public Briefing #LagingHandaPH.

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Source: PCOO-NIB (News and Information Bureau-Data Processing Center)