

HEALTH PROTOCOLS like mask wearing, handwashing, and physical distancing, which were put in place due to the coronavirus pandemic, will also be effective in preventing the transmission of monkeypox, according to an infectious disease expert.

Though the Philippines has not seen any cases so far, it's possible for the virus first detected in West and Central Africa to enter

Minimum health standards can curb monkeypox transmission

the country through incoming travelers, said Dr. Rontgene M. Solante, a disease expert on the government's pandemic response panel, at a Philippine College of Physicians forum on Tuesday.

"Minimum health standards are then important to maintain because both droplets

and close contact are potential modes of transmission," he said.

Data from the World Health Organization (WHO) shows that most of this year's cases of monkeypox are reported in non-endemic countries, with 65% of the 7,892 active cases from Jan. 1 to July 7, occurring in Europe.

Dr. Solante warned that even though the risk for the general population is considered low, children, elderly, pregnant women, and the immunocompromised are at high risk.

The common symptoms are rashes, lesions, fever, and lymphadenopathy (swollen

lymph nodes). The case fatality rate is 3% to 6%.

"There's a vaccine and antiviral treatment being researched abroad, but data is still limited. The treatment so far is usually supportive, meaning bed rest, isolation," he said. — **Brontë H. Lacsamana**

FULL STORY



Read the full story by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or by typing the link <bit.ly/MonkeyPox072022>

As COVID spreads anew, event organizers lean on mask wearing, distancing

THE local meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE) industry is picking up, as is in-person worship, despite the recent increase in coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases.

Organizers are relying on safety protocols such as temperature checks, mask wearing, social distancing, and "cough etiquette" to prevent their events from becoming super-spreaders.

At the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP), where the Cinemalaya Independent Film Festival will be back with onsite screenings from Aug. 5 to 14, temperature checks are required at the entrances.

Patrons are likewise asked to wear face masks and present their vaccination records, said the venue operations division of the CCP's production and exhibition department.

"Although we are already allowed to accommodate up to 100% venue capacity, the CCP venues remain at 80% seating capacity," the department told *BusinessWorld* in a July 15 e-mail.

In March 2020, CCP canceled 800 shows that would have welcomed 800,000 visitors as a result of the first pandemic-induced lockdown.

At Makati Diamond Residences, event participants are "excited, happy, and eager" to experience face-to-face events again, said Lili-An S. Popa, director of sales and marketing of the luxury serviced apartment in Legaspi Village. "We've made it a point to keep in touch with our previous clients. Having a good business relationship with them has paid off."

Like CCP, social distancing at Makati Diamond Residences is "still highly encouraged."

Event reservations at the serviced apartment are typically for 60 guests.

"We would like to be optimistic in assessing that the global situation is improving," Ms. Popa said in a separate July 15 e-mail. "However, there are still other factors affecting the Philippine economy. Thus, the MICE market is treading carefully in the planning, marketing, and implementing of activities."

CCP and Makati Diamond Residences moreover have HEPA filters in its air-handling units and ducts.

Religious organizations such as the Jehovah's Witnesses have also started welcoming its members back in hybrid worship.

"There is a collective shout of joy among Jehovah's Witnesses around the world," said James Ryan G. Morales, Philippine spokesman of Jehovah's Witnesses. "While we have prospered in many ways as individuals and congregations using technology to bring us together, nothing can adequately replace being together in person."

Meetings, which draw about 100 attendees, are conducted nationwide across its 2,436 Kingdom Halls either in-person or through the remote conferencing app Zoom. Guidelines for in-person attendees include mask wearing, as well as proof of full vaccination status for individuals 18 years and above.

As with both CCP and Makati Diamond Residences, each of the King-

dom Halls have stations equipped with sanitizers. Each hall also has liquid soaps and paper towels made available to meeting attendees.

"High-touch surfaces such as chairs, doorknobs, countertops, and faucets are cleaned and sanitized after each congregation meeting," Mr. Morales said. "Virtual attendance via Zoom continues to function for unvaccinated individuals, or for those who show symptoms of sickness or prefer to stay at home."

Resuming in-person meetings "brings us closer together as we endure the hardships of inflation, tragedies, and anxiety," added Mr. Morales.

The government, through the Inter-Agency Task Force, 100% capacity in establishments in areas under Alert Level 1 on June 4.

The Department of Health (DoH) encourages the public to continue to wear masks, follow health protocols, and get vaccinated.

As of this writing, the agency has yet to set its vaccination and booster targets for the Marcos administration's first 100 days.

In a July 18 Viber message to reporters, the DoH said that 15,592,533 individuals out of the total eligible population of 65,340,001 have been boosted.

According to the DoH's latest COVID bulletin, there were 14,640 coronavirus infections in the past week, with a daily average of 2,091 cases. The daily average from July 11 to 17 rose by 44% from a week earlier, it added. — **Patricia B. Mirasol**

OPINION

Lessons learned for future pandemic preparedness

The biopharmaceutical industry has shared lessons learned for future pandemic preparedness, building on its experience of successfully developing and manufacturing vaccines, treatments, and diagnostics to go head-to-head with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Such lessons are crucial as COVID-19 evolves into more infectious variants, and as other diseases like monkeypox continue to threaten the world with their potential spread.

The report by the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers & Associations (IFPMA) titled *Applying Lessons Learned from Covid-19 to Create a Healthier, Safer, More Equitable World* outlined important actions to counter a pandemic or emerging health threats.

Central to these lessons are urgent pathogen and surveillance sharing, an enabling innovation ecosystem, regulatory flexibility, partnerships for health equity, strengthening health systems, and vaccine confidence, said the IFPMA.

Specifically, health security starts with pathogen surveillance and sharing. While increased investments in improved and expanded pathogen and disease surveillance are needed, immediate access to pathogens and their genetic information will be equally important.

Another lesson is the value of partnerships to accelerate research and development and manufacturing. Effective voluntary partnerships spanning the globe accelerated research and development (R&D) and manufacturing for COVID-19 vaccines and treatments. More than 330 partnerships — public-private, private-private, private-academic, and others — bolstered manufacturing capacity, facilitated technology and knowledge transfer, and drove historically rapid research and development. As a result, vaccine administration increased from zero doses in 2020 to more than 12 billion doses in 2022.

There is also a need for advance market commitments to support manufacturing scale-up for global pandemic response. Advance market commitments for COVID-19 vaccines and therapeutics allowed for vital supplemental investments in production capacity and voluntary technology transfer.

Another lesson is the role of innovation in pandemic preparedness and response. Years of investment in R&D — even in the face of costly failures — laid the groundwork for shortened development timelines for the mRNA and viral vector vaccines now in use against SARS-CoV-2. The development of the first vaccine approved for human use took just about a year, while the first batches of vaccines from research-based pharmaceutical companies came in early 2021.

Another lesson is that the lack of multiple, globally sourced components delayed pharmaceutical distribution throughout the pandemic. Shortages of raw materials and intermediate products made worse by trade restrictions and competition for and among vendors resulted in inefficient allocation of available supply, leaving most developers less capable of rapidly testing, manufacturing, and delivering COVID-19 vaccines and therapeutics.

For low-income countries, there must also be an established procurement system. The IFPMA noted that the COVAX facility was not sufficiently funded or organized quickly enough to secure advance purchase agreements for doses on a par with high-income country purchasers.

Meanwhile, regulatory flexibility and convergence help ensure safety and speed of access. COVID-19 vaccines and therapeutics were developed in record time due to the extraordinary degree of collaboration between industry and national and regional regulatory authorities. Collaborative consultations saved lives by managing speed, efficacy, and safety.

Moreover, vaccine nationalism imperils everyone because no one is safe until everyone is. Policies like export restrictions and vaccine hoarding, regardless of global public health need, have intensified and likely prolonged the COVID-19 pandemic.

There is also a need to strengthen delivery infrastructure. Everyone has a collective responsibility to ensure equitable access to vaccines and treatment, and to build the necessary infrastructure supporting countries' ability to deliver needed vaccines and medicines ahead of the next one.

Finally, vaccine confidence is critical for success. Ending the pandemic demands that public confidence in COVID-19 vaccines and the systems that deliver them be sustained. Vaccines won't work if people won't take them. Concerted, cross-sector action to build public trust is critical now and will need to be maintained long after the pandemic has ended.

The IFPMA's "lessons learned" is a reminder that it is crucial to build on the successes, and improve where lapses were found in pandemic preparedness and response. These lessons must be remembered so that the fight against this current pandemic (or future health emergencies) does not go back to square one.

TEODORO B. PADILLA is the executive director of Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP), which represents the biopharmaceutical medicines and vaccines industry in the country. Its members are at the forefront of research and development efforts for COVID-19 and other diseases that affect Filipinos.



Republika ng Pilipinas
LUNGSOD NG MAKATI
SANGGUNIANG PANLUNGSOD OF MAKATI

PRESENT:

Councilor	HON. VIRGILIO V. HILARIO, JR. – Temporary Presiding Officer
Councilor	HON. DENNIS B. ALMARIO
Councilor	HON. MARIA DOLORES M. ARAYON
Councilor	HON. MARTIN JOHN PIO Q. ARENAS
Councilor	HON. JOEL M. ARIONES
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LnB President	HON. MARIBEL F. VITALES
SK President	HON. RODOLFO C. SAN PEDRO, JR.

N.B.

Vice Mayor HON. MONIQUE YAZMIN MARIA Q. LAGDAMEO – Acting City Mayor

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Secretary to the Sanggunian ATTY. DINDO R. CERVANTES

Upon motion of Hon. J.M. Ariones, duly seconded, the Sangguniang Panlungsod of Makati, by a majority vote, approved City Ordinance No. 2022-A-002 on second and final reading.

CITY ORDINANCE NO. 2022-A-002

Authors: Hon. A.P. Padilla, Hon. D.B. Almario, Hon. B.B. Banqued, Hon. V.V. Hilario, Jr., and Hon. R.A.Q. Saguisag, Jr.

Co-Authors: Hon. M.D.M. Arayon, Hon. M.J.P.Q. Arenas, Hon. J.M. Ariones, Hon. A.J. Cruz, Hon. L.S. Javier, Jr., Hon. E.M. Marquez, Hon. C.C. Ortega, Hon. K.T. Sarosa, Hon. J.C. Villena, IV, Hon. A.A.M. Yabut, Hon. M.F. Vitales and Hon. R.C. San Pedro, Jr.

AN ORDINANCE DECLARING THE ANNUAL BUDGET FOR C.Y. 2022 OF BARANGAY CEMBO TO BE IN CONFORMITY WITH EXISTING LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS.

WHEREAS, Section 333 (a) of R.A. 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991, provides that the Sangguniang Panlungsod shall have the power to review barangay ordinances which relate to barangay budgets for the purpose of ensuring that the provisions of the aforementioned law are complied with;

WHEREAS, the Sangguniang Barangay of Cembo, by virtue of Barangay Appropriation Ordinance No. 25-07 Series of 2022, approved its Annual Budget for C.Y. 2022, a copy of such barangay ordinance, including its supporting documents, is hereto attached and made an integral part hereof as **Annex "A"**;

WHEREAS, the Honorable Members of the Sangguniang Panlungsod of Makati extensively reviewed the abovementioned document, including its attachments;

WHEREAS, after careful perusal of available documents, it was ruled upon by the Members of the Sangguniang Panlungsod of Makati that the proposed Annual Budget for C.Y. 2022 of Barangay Cembo is compliant with the minimum requirements as prescribed by existing laws, rules and regulations; hence, this Ordinance.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED, AS IT IS HEREBY ENACTED BY THE SANGGUNIANG PANLUNGSOD OF MAKATI, METRO MANILA, BY VIRTUE OF THE POWERS VESTED IN IT BY LAW, IN SESSION ASSEMBLED, that:

Section 1. The Annual Budget for C.Y. 2022 of Barangay Cembo is hereby declared to be in conformity with existing laws, rules and regulations.

Section 2. The *Certification* issued by the Budget Department dated 7 July 2022, which attests that the Annual Budget for C.Y. 2022 of Barangay Cembo substantially complies with the provisions of pertinent laws, rules and regulations, is hereby adopted *in toto*, a copy of such *Certification* is hereto attached and made an integral part hereof as **Annex "B"**;

Section 3. The provisions of this Ordinance are hereby deemed separable. If any provision hereof should be declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 4. All ordinances, resolutions and executive orders which are inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 5. Let copies of this Ordinance be furnished to the Office of the Mayor, Office of the City Administrator, Law Department, Budget Department, Accounting Department, Urban Development Department, Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG)-Makati City, Liga ng mga Barangay, Sangguniang Barangay of Cembo and other departments, offices, and agencies concerned for their information, guidance and reference.

Section 6. This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon its approval.

ENACTED BY THE SANGGUNIANG PANLUNGSOD OF MAKATI, METRO MANILA, in its Regular Session held on 13 July 2022.

Certified true and correct by:

ATTY. DINDO R. CERVANTES
Secretary to the Sangguniang Panlungsod

Attested by:

HON. VIRGILIO V. HILARIO, JR.
Temporary Presiding Officer
Member, Sangguniang Panlungsod

Approved by:

HON. MONIQUE YAZMIN MARIA Q. LAGDAMEO
Acting City Mayor