



Dengue cases on downward trend

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The Department of Health (DOH) has reported a significant decrease in the incidence of dengue in the country last year and is hoping to sustain the same trend by the end of 2021.

"In 2020, we had an 81-percent decrease in the number of cases...numbering 3,335 cases with 324 deaths," said Eileen Espiritu of the DOH Disease Prevention and Control Bureau, during an online forum on Thursday, June 17.

The data was in comparison to the 37,563 cases with 1,689 deaths recorded in 2019, wherein a national dengue epidemic was declared in the country due to spike in cases of the mosquito-borne illness.

Meanwhile, the cumulative dengue cases for this year stand at 21,478 as of April 17, which is 56 percent lower as compared to the 49,135 cases recorded during the same period in 2020. There were 80 deaths recorded for this year so far, which is 55 percent lower than the 179 fatalities in the same period also in 2020, said Espiritu.

"We remain hopeful that the decrease

in cases would be continued and of course this must be partnered with an integrated vector management and other prevention activities," she said.

Espiritu said that the case decrease in 2020 can be attributed to the strengthened implementation of the "4S" strategy amid the community quarantine restrictions imposed in the various parts of the country.

The 4S strategy includes search and destroy mosquito breeding sites, self-protection, seek early consultation, and support fogging/ spraying in hotspot areas where increase in cases is registered for two consecutive weeks to prevent an impending outbreak.

"That has been strengthened in every household especially when we are placed under community quarantine, wherein most of the people stay at home which could have also led to a better water sanitation hygiene or wash practices, thus, decrease mosquito breeding grounds," said Espiritu.

Amid the rainy season, when the dengue mosquito is most active, Espiritu assured that the hospitals in the country are ready to treat possible dengue patients.

"Ayun naman pong mga ospital natin ay meron po silang triaging and sine-separate po nila yung mga COVID-19 cases sa ibang kaso na natatanggap po nila sa hospital (As for our hospitals, they have triaging and they separate the COVID-19 cases from other (disease) cases that they receive at the hospital)," said Espiritu.

"So hanggang ngayon sinusunod pa rin natin yung issuance natin nung 2019 na magkakaroon po sila ng dengue fast lane para po matutukan ang mga pasyenteng nagkakaroon ng dengue (So until now, we are still following our issuance in 2019 that they will have a dengue fast

lane to focus on patients who have contracted dengue)," she added.

Espiritu also encouraged the public to make use of the different telemedicine hotlines.

"Huwag po tayong matakot, meron po tayong mga teleconsultation — pwede po nila itong gawin para naman po hindi po magkaroon ng delay sa treatment ng pasyente, kasi mahirap po kapag humantong tayo sa severe dengue na (Let's not be afraid, we have teleconsultations — they can do it so that there will be no delay in the treatment of the patient, because it is difficult when it progressed to severe dengue)," she said.

Espiritu also sought the assistance of the different local government units (LGUs) in disseminating information about dengue in the respective communities.

"We have to proactively communicate every single information about dengue such as the facts about dengue, how it is transmitted, and how to prevent severe infection," she said.

"We recognize that the LGUs and local communities are the backbone of the dengue response. We, at the national level, cannot do this alone. We really rely on the help of the LGUs and active participation of the members of the community," she added.