



DOH warns of possible rise in dengue cases

By **MAYEN JAYMALIN**

The Department of Health (DOH) warned yesterday against a possible rise in dengue cases in the country with the onset of the rainy season.

In a virtual briefing, DOH National Aedes-borne Viral Disease Prevention Control Program manager Ailene Espiritu reported a sharp decline in dengue cases and deaths this year.

Compared with the 49,135 dengue cases recorded by the DOH in the first four months of 2020, there were only 21,478 cases in the same period this year, said Espiritu.

This 56 percent drop in the incidence of dengue also resulted in a decline in deaths attributed to the mosquito-borne disease from 179 last year to 80 this year, she added.

For the entirety of 2020, the DOH recorded a total of 83,335 dengue cases, including 324 deaths as compared with 437,563 cases in 2019, when the country

experienced a dengue epidemic.

However, Espiritu said the country may experience a surge in cases in the coming rainy season.

"There wasn't much rain from January to April (this year) so cases were down. Now that the rainy season is setting in, surroundings should be monitored against the breeding of mosquitoes. A lot of rain is expected from July up to September - that's when dengue cases would rise," she warned.

Espiritu advised the public to consult with a doctor once dengue symptoms appear, noting that there are fast lanes prioritizing dengue patients in hospitals.

Teleconsultation is available for those who are afraid to go to the hospitals because of the pandemic, she added.

On a positive note, Espiritu said a continued decline in dengue cases could be achieved through conscious effort. "Dengue infection is a highly preventable disease. We just need to destroy mosquito breeding sites," she said.