



# Davao City cases continue surge

## OCTA: 42% more infections recorded

**BY GERARD NAVAL**

THE number of COVID-19 cases in Davao City continues to climb, a monitoring report of the independent group OCTA Research covering the period June 13 to 19 showed.

Based on the latest report, Davao City is still the local government unit (LGU) with the highest number of new cases, with an average of 252 new COVID-19

cases last week.

This is 42 percent higher compared to the average of 177 new cases during the June 6 to 12 monitoring period, according to OCTA which monitors COVID-19 trends nationwide.

Davao City's average daily attack rate (ADAR) is at 13.88 per 100,000 population in the latest report. The ADAR was 10.01 in the June 7-13 period.

The city's healthcare utilization

rate, or the COVID-19 bed occupancy rate, is still at 67 percent, which is higher than the 58 percent from June 7-13.

However, Davao City's intensive care unit (ICU) bed utilization rate is already at 95 percent. This is up from the 92 percent reported from June 7-13.

Aside from Davao City, the OCTA bulletin said eight other LGUs in the Visayas and Mindanao are in the top 10 areas, outside

Metro Manila, that contribute to the daily COVID-19 cases.

These are Bacolod City with 131 new cases, Iloilo City (122), Cagayan de Oro City (94), Zamboanga City (64), Baguio City (61), Dumaguete City (60), Butuan City (59), General Santos City (54), and Cebu city (54).

Among the top 10, those with high average daily attack rates are

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Bacolod (22.49), Iloilo (25.83), Cagayan de Oro (12.82), Baguio (16.41), Dumaguete (43.80), Butuan (15.07), and General Santos (13.93).

Those with high healthcare utilization rates are Iloilo (90%), Cagayan de Oro (76%), and Butuan (74%); while ICU beds are mostly occupied in Iloilo (100%), Cagayan de Oro (83%), Baguio (77%), and General Santos (86%).

Cagayan de Oro Mayor Oscar Moreno said the COVID-19 situation in the city is "manageable" but the number of new cases is still "high."

"But we have managed to slow it down. Yesterday, we have 60 plus cases reported. The highest was 100 plus two weeks ago," Moreno said in a radio interview.

According to the Department of Health, the total COVID-19

cases in Cagayan de Oro City was at 10,052 as of last Saturday -- 875 active cases, 9,032 recovered and 145 deaths.

"Our two-week growth rate has gone to negative 10," Moreno said.

Moreno also said the current health utilization rate in the city is at 63 percent.

He sought to downplay remarks made by Cagayan de Oro Rep. Rufus Rodriguez who, due to frustration about the rising COVID-19 cases, last week called out vaccine czar Carlito Galvez for the slow deployment of vaccines in the city.

Rodriguez said many have died in the city because the national officials are giving much of the vaccines to Metro Manila and have not seen the urgency in Mindanao. He said those who died would have fighting chance if they were vaccinated.

"Of course we know there is limited supply (of vaccines) during

the past weeks ... It's really hard, and of course I know our regional office (of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases) is only trying to make good what is available to them," he said.

Moreno said the Department of Health has not only committed but has been delivering vaccines to the city.

"Congressman Rufus was just misinformed and that's why I am apologizing to the secretary," said Moreno, referring to Galvez.

Vice President Leni Robredo reiterated her call for the government to ramp up COVID-19 testing and deploy more vaccine to areas outside the National Capital Region (Metro Manila), especially in provinces that are now considered "areas of concern."

Robredo said that while Metro Manila is still an area of concern, the number of cases in the metrop-

olis has been declining. However, since positivity its rate remains high, there is a need to increase testing, including other provinces as identified earlier by OCTA.

"We're always battling for increased testing in areas with high positivity rates. We sound like a broken record, asking for additional testing but not only in Metro Manila but in areas of concern all over the Philippines and we hope it'll be supported... We hope they'll (government) support more testing, more vaccines because that's really the problem," Robredo said in Filipino on her weekly radio program.

Robredo said the vaccination rollout has to be expedited in the provinces because the inoculation of those falling under A2 category in the national vaccination drive, or senior citizens, has just started while Metro Manila has already begun vaccinating the A5 category or indigents.

The growth rate of the virus in Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental has alarmed OCTA researchers who said the two are the "areas of most concern" outside NCR Plus with Dumaguete City now classified as "extremely high risk."

OCTA also cited as areas of concerns Iloilo City, Butuan City in Agusan del Norte, Tacloban City, and Polomolok in South Cotabato while classifying Tagum City in Davao del Norte, Legazpi City in Albay, and Tagbilaran City in Bohol as "emerging hot spots."

It has also been reported that the critical care capacity of Davao City, Iloilo City, General Santos City, Tuguegarao, and Koronadal in South Cotabato is now at "critical level."

Robredo said health workers in the Bicol region want the highest quarantine classification declared there because they are alarmed over the rising number of COVID cases which, while remaining lower

than Metro Manila's record, is still potentially disastrous because of its low hospital bed capacity.

"The problem in Bicol is our hospitals have fewer hospital beds compared to the National Capital Region (NCR), Cebu, Davao, that's why medical groups are having an anxiety," she said.

The Vice President said the Department of Health's (DOH) figures does not seem to reflect the real situation on the ground because it has reported that hospitals are only 60 to 70 percent full.

"Doctors claim that it's not really representative of the real situation on the ground because people are already lining up in hospitals. In fact in Legazpi City, we have a partner there whose spouse has died. They waited for like more than a day to schedule a cremation because the situation there is that bad," Robredo said. — **With Victor Reyes and Wendell Vigilia**