DOH: 4 REGIONS AT HIGH RISK, THEIR HOSPITALS UNDER STRAIN

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An official from the Department of Health (DOH) on Wednesday said two regions in the Visayas and two others in Mindanao were now considered "high-risk" areas for COVID-19 due to the growing number of daily cases and hospital beds being occupied.

Dr. Alethea De Guzman, officer in charge of the DOH Epidemiology Bureau, said new cases reported daily were "higher than usual" in the Eastern Visayas, Western Visayas, Davao and Soccsksargen regions compared to their total population.

"We are also seeing a corresponding increase in their health-care and ICU (intensive care unit) utilization rates," De Guzman said during an online town hall meeting on Wednesday.

One way health authorities measure geographical risk is by determining the figure for the average daily attack rate (Adar), or the number of people found infected with the coronavirus per 100,000 population, over a two-week period.

Another measure is the proportion of hospital beds, particularly those in ICUs, being used against the total available in a given city, province or region. The higher the proportion, the higher the risk.

The four regions posted an Adar of above seven, which is considered high. In comparison, Metro Manila with an Adar of 5.7 recorded last week is considered "low risk."

Metro now 'low risk' De Guzman said the ICU utilization rate in Western Visayas was 83.17 percent. Davao region had an ICU utilization rate of 86.22 percent and 74.39 percent in Soccsksargen, she said.

While Eastern Visayas' ICU utilization rate is at the "safe" level, De Guzman said it was included in the list of high-risk regions because it had a high Adar of 7.05.

The town hall meeting was attended mostly by local government representatives, Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles, other officials from the DOH and the Department of Labor and Employment, including Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III.

De Guzman gave an overview of the COVID-19 situation in the rest of the country.

She said majority of the regions in Luzon, except for Mimaropa, were showing a "general decline in cases."

Mimaropa recorded an uptick in new cases over the past two weeks, De Guzman said.

Metro Manila, once the epicenter of the pandemic, is now considered low risk as the number of cases steadily went down.

The number of cases in Central Visayas has been plateauing following a sharp decline, while most regions in Mindanao are showing a downward trend except for Davao, De Guzman reported.

Over 4k new infections The DOH on Wednesday also reported 4,509 new COVID-19 infections, which brought the total national case-load to 1,412,559.

It said 5,839 patients had recovered, increasing the number of survivors of the severe respiratory disease to 1,339,248. But 105 others had died, raising the death toll to 24,662.

The recoveries and deaths left 48,649 active cases. Of this total number of cases, 90.6 percent are mild, 4.1 percent asymptomatic, 1.5 percent critical, 2.2 percent severe and 1.63 percent moderate.

The DOH said six laboratories failed to submit their data on time, while seven duplicates were removed from the total case tally.

Another 49 cases previously tagged as recoveries were reclassified as deaths after validation, it said.