



PH RECORDS OVER 20,000 NEW COVID CASES FOR 3RD STRAIGHT DAY

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Over 20,000 new coronavirus infections were reported for the third consecutive day and health authorities warned that daily cases would continue to increase in the coming days.

On Sunday, the Department of Health (DOH) reported 20,019 new COVID-19 cases nation-

wide, the fourth highest daily tally during the pandemic.

This brought the country's confirmed COVID-19 cases to 2,080,984.

The death toll rose by 173, including 55 patients who were previously tagged as recovered, for a total 34,234 deaths.

More than 100 deaths have been reported in the past four days.

The DOH reported 20,089 more recoveries, for a total 1,889,312 recoveries, or 90.8

percent of total cases.

Nevertheless, 157,438 persons are still infected with the virus.

Majority, or 92 percent of the active cases are mild, 3.4 percent asymptomatic, 2.55 percent moderate, 1.4 percent severe and 0.7 percent critical.

Out of 73,472 persons tested on Friday, 27.5 percent were positive for the virus. The positivity rate has exceeded 27 percent for the third straight day.

The results did not include those from five laboratories

that failed to report.

The chair of the Senate basic education committee on Sunday said health authorities should begin preparing local governments for the rollout of the vaccination program for school-age children.

After the Food and Drug Administration approved the use of Moderna's COVID-19 jabs for minors age 12 to 17 years, Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian said the government should begin readying vaccination centers to target the age group.

The senator said vaccinating school-age children "would lay down a clearer path on the gradual resumption of [in-person] classes."

"At this point, I can see that one of the solutions to open our schools safely is to already inoculate our teenagers," Gatchalian said in a statement.

As the government eyes vaccination of minors by September or October, preparations should already start at the level of local governments, the senator said.

Gatchalian also called on the COVID-19 task force to allow local governments and private schools to import their own vaccines and to "inoculate their own teachers, their own school officials, as well as their own students and their own teenage population," under tripartite agreements with the national government and the manufacturers.

"This way, it will hasten the vaccine rollout in our schools and the [local governments]," he said. INQ