



Mindanao hospitals run out of COVID-19 beds

No more room for patients as medical facilities in Davao region, provinces of Zamboanga del Sur and Lanao del Sur, and Ozamiz City exceed capacity



By Leah Agonoy
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PAGADIAN CITY—Families of COVID-19 patients here were at a loss where to go as two of the province's largest hospitals declared they had run out of beds and would not be accepting patients.

Zamboanga del Sur Medical Center (ZDSMC), the province's main COVID-19 referral hospital, already ran out of COVID-19 beds almost a month ago but was still accepting patients in tents and vehicles parked on the hospital grounds until Saturday, when it issued an advisory saying that the area was full and could not accommodate more patients.

Dr. Anatalio Cagampang Jr., ZDSMC chief, also told referring hospitals that ZDSMC was already running beyond capacity, advising them to call and check first before bringing their patients in.

ZDSMC has 100 beds allocated to COVID-19 patients but as of Sunday, the number of admitted patients already reached 185.

Earlier, the Provincial Inter-Agency Task Force decided to use a separate building as additional space for patients in the hospital but the new space got filled up immediately, according to Cagampang.

ZDSMC's advisory came only two days after Dr. Richard Sison, medical center chief 2 of Margosatubig Regional Hospital (MRH) in Margosatubig town, Zamboanga del Sur, also notified the public that the hospital already ran out of beds and that patients seeking help should seek other hospitals in the region. MRH's 124 beds for COVID-19 patients have been



OVERFLOWING The parking lot of Zamboanga del Sur Medical Center in Pagadian City is dotted with tents in this photo taken on Saturday to accommodate COVID-19 patients as it already ran out of beds in August. It continued to treat patients in tents and vehicles parked outside its building.

—PHOTO COURTESY OF DR. RICO OCAMPO

fully occupied, according to the hospital. "As much as we wanted to serve every COVID-19 patient needing hospital care, the hospital, its staff and facilities can no longer accommodate patients for optimal care," Sison said.

Sharp rise

The Zamboanga del Sur COVID-19 Task Force reported 223 fresh cases of COVID-19 in the province on Saturday, bringing to 1,787 the total active cases in the province. The current number of cases showed a sharp rise from only nine new cases reported in the province on July 22 this year, when the total number of active cases still hovered at 271 cases.

On Saturday, the task force also recorded 11 new COVID-19 deaths, almost doubling the usual four and five daily deaths it earlier posted.

Audrey Basas-Cabato, executive officer of Pagadian City Emergency Operations Center, said the surge of COVID-19 cases in the province led to the shortage of beds

Ozamiz City's Mayor Hilarion A. Ramiro Sr. Medical Center, where COVID-19 patients in Zamboanga del Sur were likely to go, also announced it was already running at full capacity on Friday.

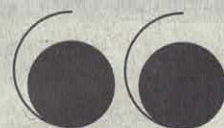
"Our beds allocated to COVID-19 have reached full capacity," the hospital said in an advisory.

Ozamiz City, an economic center in Misamis Occidental province, is about two hours away by land from Pagadian.

Davao, Lanao, too

In the Davao region, new COVID-19 cases reached 1,031 on Saturday for one day alone, bringing to 13,636 the total number of active cases in the region, according to the report of the Department of Health.

Of the new cases reported on Saturday, 498 or about half of the region's total were in Davao City, which posted a total of active cases at 6,208. Davao del Sur posted 238 new cases, bringing to 3,006 its total number of active cases; and Davao del Norte, which posted 136 new cases for the day



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istered 1,636 total active cases.

Only one of the 422 COVID-19 beds at Southern Philippines Medical Center, the region's main referral hospital based in Davao City, remained vacant. Its 160 isolation beds are all occupied while only six of its intensive care unit beds remain free.

In Lanao del Sur, the provincial Inter-Agency Task Force on COVID-19 reverted to its "No Sunday Movement" as the surge of COVID-19 cases threatened to overwhelm the 150-bed capacity Amai Pakpak Medical Center in Marawi City. On Sept. 2 alone, the hospital already accepted 166 admissions, which was already beyond capacity.

Gov. Mamintal Adiong signed the new order to practically stop all movements in the city on Sunday in the entire Lanao del Sur and its capital city Marawi from Sept. 5 to Sept. 13. —WITH REPORTS FROM