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## Hospitals warn of manpower shortage

By **MAYEN JAYMALIN**

The continued exodus of nurses going abroad could cause manpower shortage and possible paralysis of the country's health care facilities within the next six months, according to a group of private hospitals.

"If we can't prevent this exodus, in another six months there may be no more nurses left, leaving our health facilities paralyzed. That is what we fear, because if we are too lenient in letting our nurses go abroad and we can't find any replacement, we will lack health care workers. And we may be limited in our capacity to accept

patients," Private Hospital Association of the Philippines Inc. (PHAPI) president Dr. Jose de Grano said yesterday.

In the past three weeks alone, De Grano said about five percent of nurses from private hospitals have tendered their resignation.

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He also expressed concern over proposals to downgrade further the existing alert level in Metro Manila, fearing that it could trigger another surge of COVID cases.

"Let us see in the next two or three weeks if the cases will rise. If the numbers won't decline and instead plateau or increase, I think it means we haven't seen a downtrend in cases. Let's us not be complacent and follow the minimum health standard," he stressed in Filipino.

Although there are fewer new COVID cases, de Grano said active cases and critical cases are still on the uptrend, with severe and critical jumping by 12 to 15

percent.

Also, even if medical supplies for treating COVID patients are still sufficient in Metro Manila, supplies are depleting in the Visayas and Mindanao.

Former health secretary and now Iloilo congresswoman Janette Garin questioned yesterday the decision of the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) to vaccinate minors in selected hospitals in Metro Manila.

"While I understand the need for precautions, common sense would dictate that the hospital setting is not the safest place to be during a pandemic."

- With Delon Porcalla

