



Strengthening Prevention and Control of Emerging Diseases

BACKGROUND

- There is an increased risk for spreading emerging and re-emerging human and animal diseases that may cause public health emergencies due to increased globalization and mobility of travelers and goods.
- The Bureau of Quarantine (BOQ) was established to strengthen prevention and control of emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases. This requires that they decrease the threat of emerging and re-emerging human and animal-borne diseases by enabling stricter enforcement of quarantine protocols, and streamline electronic information system data collection process to increase data capture of possible emerging infectious disease (EID) carriers
- The BOQ currently abides by the International Health Regulations (IHR), an international binding, legal instrument for all Member States of the World Health Organization. The IHR enables countries to timely respond to public health risks and emergencies that may possibly penetrate international borders.
- Current processes of BOQ in border control include: (1) infrared screening of all passengers coming from affected countries; (2) distribution of Health Declaration Checklist; (3) continual training on use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE); (4) infection control; (5) surveillance of countries with emerging infectious diseases, and (6) tabletop exercises of contingency plan. Current logistics of BOQ in ensuring border control include 23 quarantine stations (air and sea ports), infrared scanners for all international airports, electronic data reporting system in all stations, and a minimum of 3 personnel manning each station and (7) strong interagency coordination
- Executive Order No. 168, s. 2014, "Creating the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases in the Philippines" was crafted as a response to emerging infectious diseases (EID) in the country.

CURRENT ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

- Majority of Filipino migrant workers come from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and Central Africa with several possible points of entry in the Philippines. This poses a challenge in identifying possible carriers of EID from affected countries upon entering the Philippines; therefore, there is a need to strengthen enforcement of quarantine protocols.
- Coordination with non – government agencies (i.e. PAL, Cebu Pacific) and National Governments Agencies on electronic information system data sharing and other protection measures is currently insufficient.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Strengthen procedures in encountering emerging disease through case definition (source and mode of transmission), risk assessment, and containment plan
2. Create a Joint Memorandum with the Bureau of Immigration, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, Department of Foreign Affairs and other stakeholders on electronic information system data gathering of exposed and affected travelers to emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases arriving at ports of entry
3. Ensure collaboration with the Department of Agriculture (DA) by integrating policies on infection control processes with those of the Bureau of Animal Industry

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