CIDG now tracing nCoV patients' co-passengers

By Maricel V. Cruz and Rey Requejo

CONTACT tracing of aircraft passengers who traveled with the Chinese couple found positive with the 2019 novel coronavirus has begun, officials said.

Speaking to reporters in Camp Crame, Criminal Investigation and Detection Group director Maj. Gen. Joel Napoleon Coronel said the China couple, who traveled to the Philippines from Hong Kong, shared three different flights with more than 300 passengers.

"Based on the information provided by the Department of Health, I understand a lot of the 331, more than 50 have been accounted and contacted already and the remaining 270 plus, we have to manually and individually check on them if needed," Coronel said.

He said they would start with the flight from Hong Kong to Cebu, then Cebu to Dumaguete City in Negros Oriental, then Dumaguete to Manila.

In related developments, Metro Manila governments will require the police for protocols in handling persons under investigation (PUIs) for possible novel coronavirus infection but refuse to undergo health measures.

At a congressional hearing conducted by the House committee on Metro Manila Development, Metro Manila Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council’s Mike Salalima said the 17 local governments units in the National Capital Region wanted to clear up the matter.

The MMDRMC made the request for protocols from the National Capital Region Police Office.

"We also requested NCRPO [guidelines on] how to go about their memorandum in as far as assisting our DRRMs and Department of Health sa pagkuha ng mga, let’s say, maitigas na ulo na PUIs," Salalima said.

This developed as Quezon Rep. Angelina Tan, chairperson of the House committee on health, filed House Bill 6166 in an effort to help the Department of Health strengthen its health system response to contain the spread of 2019-nCoV ARD through the immediate procurement of adequate and appropriate surgical masks for persons under investigation and health workers as well as the needed personal protective equipment for our health manpower including the repatriation of affected Filipinos abroad, particularly in the mainland China and its administrative regions.

At the same time, the Philippine National Police-Anti-Cybercrime Group on Wednesday said it was looking into six social media posts that allegedly spread fake news about the 2019 novel coronavirus: acute respiratory disease (2019-nCoV ARD).