120 infected abroad

On Saturday, the DOH said here are 120 confirmed COVID-19 cases among overseas Filipinos. Of the number, 83 have recovered from the infection and been discharged from hospital.

DOH said there are 37 overseas Filipinos positive for COVID-19 who are still in isolation or admitted at different hospitals.

Japan accounted for the biggest number of cases with 80, followed by the United States with 19. Cases in Japan and the US were that of the Filipino crew of MV Diamond Princess and MV Grand Princess, respectively.

Nine cases were recorded in Singapore, five in Hong Kong, while the United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, and France had two cases each, and one in Switzerland.

The health agency also reported that seven foreign nationals, who had a history of travel in the country, have tested positive for COVID-19.

But the DOH said the seven foreign nationals also have history of travel to other countries aside from the Philippines before they manifested symptoms and tested positive to the infection.

"Three to five percent of the COVID patients suffer from critical symptoms of the infection, and we all know that the elderly with pre-existing conditions comprised the majority of this number," Duque pointed out.

In China, which accounted for the biggest number of COVID-19 cases worldwide, Duque said there was a 3.4 percent mortality among patients afflicted with the virus. Elderly with pre-existing medical conditions such as diabetes, hypertension and renal kidney disease comprised the bulk of fatalities.

Duque stressed that the greater number of COVID-19 patients have recovered.

"While the number of COVID patients and those being admitted is increasing, the number of those recovering from the infection is also growing. We cannot just report it immediately because the recovery period is long, from three to six weeks," he pointed out.

"Until the patients tested negative from the virus, they cannot be declared to have recovered. Maybe we can say clinically recovering, but there must be evidence to say such," Duque added.

The health chief then urged those who went home to the provinces from Metro Manila to undergo a 14-day quarantine because they may have been exposed to the virus without knowing it.

"They cannot definitely say they are not carriers of the virus since 80 percent of those infected only have mild symptoms, no cough or anything," Duque said.

Duque further lauded the health workers, some of whom have been infected with the virus while providing care and treatment for COVID-19 positive patients. "That's why I am always reminding them to wear masks and personal protective equipment because they are exposed to getting the infection," he stressed.

Concerning implementation of the community quarantine, Duque said there are few problems but these are being addressed.