



## UP Manila Bulletin No. 1 on 2019-nCoV: 04 February 2020

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE UP MANILA FACULTY, STUDENTS, and STAFF regarding the 2019 Novel Coronavirus Infections.

#### **BACKGROUND ABOUT THE 2019 NOVEL CORONAVIRUS ACUTE RESPIRATORY DISEASE:**

On 31 December 2019, a series of pneumonia cases of unknown etiology was seen in Wuhan City, Hubei, Province of China. The seafood market was suspected to be the center of the outbreak and, thus, was closed on 01 January 2020.

By 09 January 2020, the cause of the pneumonia was traced to the identification of a novel type of coronavirus (2019-nCoV).

As of 22 January 2020, 440 cases of confirmed 2019-nCoV pneumonia with 9 deaths have been documented in Wuhan City and several other provinces and cities of China including Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen, as well as other countries (USA, Japan, Thailand, South Korea). Fifteen healthcare workers from Wuhan City have also been diagnosed to have pneumonia.

By 28 January 2020, the confirmed cases reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) (<http://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/202001278-sitrep-8-ncov-cleared.pdf>) has ballooned to 4,593 cases globally, with 4,537 cases from China, 976 severe pneumonias and 106 deaths.

As of 30 January 2020, the Department of Health (DOH) announced the first case of the 2019-nCoV ARD in a 38 year-old female from Wuhan City, China (<http://www.doh.gov.ph/2019-ncov>).

By 31 January 2020, the WHO gave the new condition the official name as **2019 novel Coronavirus Acute Respiratory Disease (2019 nCoV ARD)**. The global number of cases is 9,826, with 9,720 confirmed cases in China, 213 deaths and 19 countries affected (<http://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/202001278-sitrep-11-ncov.pdf>).

On 02 February 2020, Health Secretary Francisco Duque announced the second confirmed case in the Philippines. He also announced the death of a 44 year-old male from Wuhan, China, due to the 2019-nCoV infection, the first death due to the new coronavirus outside mainland China.

### **WHAT CAN WE DO TO REDUCE THE RISK FOR THE 2019-nCoV INFECTION OF THE UP MANILA COMMUNITY?**

The Philippine General Hospital (PGH) followed the framework of the recommended response of healthcare facilities to this global threat and now implements a unified program to efficiently screen, evaluate, and manage cases of the 2019 novel coronavirus without unduly exposing its healthcare staff to the risk of getting this highly infectious illness.

The PGH Hospital Infection Control Unit (HICU) recommends the following for the UP Manila community:

#### **1) Minimize the number of potential sources of infection among the members of the community.**

At the time of the writing of this guidance, the important exposures which are considered important risks to acquire the 2019-nCoV infection are:

- ✓ Travel to or residence in the city of Wuhan, Hubei, Province China, in the last 14 days;
  - ✓ Travel to China's Special Administrative Regions (ie, Hong Kong and Macau) in the last 14 days;
  - ✓ Close physical contact with a confirmed or probable case of 2019-nCoV infection;
  - ✓ Visiting or working in a live animal market in Wuhan, Hubei, Province China;
  - ✓ Living in the same household as the nCoV patient;
  - ✓ Worked together in close proximity with an nCoV patient;
  - ✓ Shared the same classroom with an nCoV patient;
  - ✓ Travelling together with an nCoV patient in any kind of conveyance;
  - ✓ Healthcare associated exposure including direct care for nCoV patients, working with healthcare workers infected with the nCoV, visiting patients or staying in the same close environment as an nCoV patient.
- At this time when confirmed cases in the Philippines are still very limited, the clearest risk factors are travel to mainland China, Macau, and Hong Kong. If a

certain individual had traveled to these areas, he/she should be isolated right away upon arrival in the Philippines.

- This is called **QUARANTINE**: restricting movement of persons who may have been exposed to the infection but are currently well, without any sign or symptom of illness.
- In the DOH algorithm, a person advised to go on quarantine is called a **PERSON UNDER MONITORING or PUM**
- Quarantine means staying away from other unexposed persons.
- It means staying alone in the house and not going out of the room and, especially, not out of the house.
- It means not going to school, not going to work, not going to the mall even for a few minutes.
- Quarantine is an effective strategy to reduce chance that a PUM may unknowingly spread the infection to others.
- A quarantined person can communicate to others by phone, email, text, and similar medium without face to face contact.
- Quarantine is best self-initiated and voluntary.
- However, because of the public health implications or repercussions of failed quarantine, quarantine must be followed, otherwise local authorities have the legal basis for enforcing such actions. Some persons have been refusing quarantine and the Philippine police or local governments or immigration officers will be informed.
- After the 14-day incubation, the PUM is released from quarantine and considered not to be potentially infectious anymore.
- **STEPS TO GO ON QUARANTINE:**
  - Inform the UPHS by phone: c/o Head of UP Health Service, Dr. Andrew Ang (0917-837-4944 or PGH trunkline + 632 8554-8400 local 2077).
  - UPHS gets the patient's contact number, registers the patient's name, and advises this patient to go on home quarantine for 14 days from the time of exposure, monitor body temperature daily, and observe for signs of cough, colds, throat pain and fever.
  - Inform your class adviser/department chair by phone or email or FB.
  - Arrange to be alone in your apartment/dorm/home. Secure a surgical mask if with other individuals. Arrange for food supply and other needs to be brought to your accommodations. Have a thermometer to measure your daily temperatures.

- The UPHS will periodically check on you and ask your temperature readings.
  - Day 1 is Day of arrival. Day 14 is on the 14<sup>th</sup> day after arrival.
  - Clearance for back-to-work or back-to-school is completion of the 14 days.
- **IMPORTANT:** If, during the quarantine period, the PUM changes his/her status from feeling well to feeling sick such as having sore throat, cough, colds, and, especially, fever, he/she needs to consult the UPHS or health facility of choice immediately. These are the STEP TO GO TO THE UPHS TO CONSULT FOR POSSIBLE nCoV INFECTION
    - The sick individual must first make sure to **ISOLATE** self. This begins with wearing a surgical mask. **ISOLATION** is the term used to separate a sick individual from others who are not sick. ISOLATION is a very critical strategy to reduce transmission of the infection.
    - The sick individual is requested to call and alert the UPHS that he/she is coming so the area can be prepared accordingly. Contact numbers are the same as above and is as follows: Dr. Andrew Ang (0917-837-4944 or PGH trunkline + 632 8554-8400 local 2077).
    - With the mask in place, the UP Manila employee or student will go straight to the UPHS and will be assessed by the UPHS consultant who will use the decision tool for the 2019-nCoV to determine disposition.
    - Alternatively, the UP Manila employee or student may be advised on the phone and referred directly to the nCoronavirus Triage Area for further evaluation.
    - If he/she meets the criteria of a **Patient under Investigation (PUI)**, admission will be advised. The PUI will be admitted to the designated area
    - The UPHS nurse will call local 3137 and inform them that there is a UPHS patient for admission.
    - Once a room is available, the UPHS utility worker assist the PUI and transport him/her to the designated room.
    - The PUI will be managed accordingly (as per ***PGH Implementing Guidelines on the Preparedness and Response to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus Acute Respiratory Disease (2019 nCoV ARD) Updated 02 February 2020***)
    - Nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal swabs will be taken to confirm or rule out the presence of the nCoV.

- Contacts of identified PUIs will be tracked and referred to the Regional Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit officer (RESU) so she/he can monitor these contacts in the community.

## **2) Reduce exposure to and transmission of the novel coronavirus.**

The World Health Organization's (WHO) standard recommendations for the general public on a range of illnesses are as follows, which include hand and respiratory hygiene, and safe food practices (<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>):

- Frequently clean hands by using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water;
- When coughing and sneezing cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – throw tissue away immediately and wash hands;
- Avoid close contact with anyone who has fever and cough;
- If you have fever, cough, and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early. Volunteer previous travel history with your physician or other health care providers;
- When visiting live markets in areas currently experiencing cases of novel coronavirus, avoid direct unprotected contact with live animals and surfaces in contact with animals;
- The consumption of raw or undercooked animal products should be avoided. Raw meat, milk or animal organs should be handled with care, to avoid cross-contamination with uncooked foods, as per good food safety practices.

## **3) Stay informed about this new 2019-nCoV. Keep updated. Attend discussions/seminars and reputable. Listen to the radio and television. Do not panic!**

- The PGH HICU has been giving lectures and orientations since 28 January 2020 and will continue to do so. The UP Manila community members are always welcome to attend any of these.
- More and more groups are now organizing seminars regarding this new illness.
- Free online information and educational courses are being offered such as in the WHO site <https://openwho.org/courses/introduction-to-ncov>

- The recommended sites are the WHO site <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public> and the DOH site <https://www.doh.gov.ph/2019-nCov>

#### **4) Reinforce access to health-related strategies to encourage positive healthy habits among students, faculty, and staff of the UP Manila.**

- Augment hand hygiene equipment in as many strategic locations as possible in the university. Make sure that there are enough supplies and stocks of soap and/or alcohol to disinfect hands, not only in comfort rooms but also classrooms, offices, corridors, entrances of seminar rooms or auditoriums, and the cafeterias. The refilling of the alcohol or hand rub bottles must be systematic and documented.
- Have appropriate trash bins so UP Manila can dispose of their used tissues and other trash accordingly.
- Offer vaccination. Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to take advantage of programs of student organizations such as the ImMUity Program of the Mu Sigma Phi Sorority where they periodically offer vaccines at reasonable cost to the UP community.
- Put informative posters around campus. Post accurate information on UP Manila website.
- Colleges and units must review their hand hygiene maintenance as well as routine cleaning schedules of their janitorial services.

#### **5) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):**

- Is the UP PGH ready to manage nCoV patients?  
**HICU Answer:** Yes. The UP PGH has a process in place to screen for, isolate, manage, and control the nCoV infection. Please see the **PGH Implementing Guidelines on the Preparedness and Response to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus Acute Respiratory Disease (2019 nCoV ARD) Updated February 2, 2020.**
- How are the nCoV cases being managed at the PGH?  
**HICU Answer:** As above, the PGH has overall and specific procedures related to the nCoV. Its processes and guideline seek to: prepare our hospital to efficiently identify possible cases of the novel coronavirus infections; organize an appropriate clinical management plan for cases of the nCoV infections; reduce unnecessary and unprotected exposures and risks of PGH personnel as well as the UP Manila community to cases of

*the nCoV infections; and, protect other patients, families and the community against the threats of nCoV.*

***The PGH nCoV team is a multidisciplinary team.*** *The frontliners are physicians and nurses from relevant clinical departments led by the Department of Emergency Medicine and Divisions of Infectious Diseases. The Security, Paramedical, Ambulance, Janitorial have key roles in the PGH pathway. The Director's Advisory Board takes a central role in overseeing this emergency response.*

- I heard that PUIs are being admitted at the UP-PGH. Should I completely avoid going to the hospital?

***HICU Answer:*** *The best answer to this question is: with or without the nCoV, we should go to the PGH or any hospital ONLY if we need to. DO NOT use the hospital as a shortcut from one place to another. DO NOT use hospital areas as meeting points of social gatherings.*

*On the other hand, if you have a legitimate reason to be in the hospital, the nCoV processes have been designed so that the general public and rest of staff is not unduly exposed to any possible harm.*

- Does UP Manila have a 'No Mask, No Entry' policy?

***HICU Answer:*** *No. UP Manila observes proper and prudent use of surgical masks.*

- Do I need to wear an N95 mask?

***HICU Answer:*** *In general: No.*

*If you are a student, faculty, or staff with no tasks at the hospital, there is no need for you to procure the N95 mask. N95 masks should be reserved for healthcare workers when directly caring for patients with highly communicable infections. These include illnesses such as Pulmonary tuberculosis and other forms of TB with pulmonary involvement, chickenpox, measles, mersCoV, Ebola.*

***If you are a medical student and assigned to care for a person with the infections above, please proceed to the HICU for your supply of N95.***

*For the 2019-nCoV, the WHO recommendations advise use of surgical masks in routine care and N95 masks for aerosol-generating procedures. At the PGH, N95 masks are provided to HCW who will be assigned to care for suspected and confirmed cases of nCoV.*

- Should I wear a surgical mask?

**HICU Answer:** The general brief quick answer to otherwise healthy persons who attend can school or are able to go to work is NO.

However, If you have a travel history to China, Macau, and Hong Kong and have respiratory symptoms, **you should wear a surgical mask immediately and consult the UPHS.**

If you have cough, colds, sore throat or other respiratory problems, even if you do not have a travel history to China, please wear a mask. This is to contain the infectious respiratory droplets you may have of various possible viral or bacterial etiologies. This is called SOURCE CONTROL and an important part of strategies to contain infections. In this situation, it is also best to consult the UPHS or your physician.

The other group of persons who are advised to wear surgical mask on everyday basis are the persons with immunocompromised states. In UP Manila, these are, but not limited to: persons on immunosuppressive medications like steroids and similar agents, organ transplant recipients, and with other chronic conditions.

There are other reasons you may want to wear masks, mostly personal preferences. And in the end if users want to wear mask, there is really no absolutely wrong reasons. This guidance wants to clarify that the currently known science of the nCoV assures us that there is no need to wear surgical masks routinely at this time. If you get into a situation where you are not able to purchase surgical masks, there is no reason to panic or panic-buy. Stay calm and stay updated.

- If I need to wear a mask, what is the proper way to wear a surgical mask?

**HICU Answer:** If you need to wear a mask, there is only one correct way to wear the surgical mask which is as follows: position the mask with the colored side facing outside so it covers the mouth and nostrils. The flexible bar should be adjusted over the nose bridge so that the mask feels snugly fit over the face. Wear for about 8 hours, however when the mask is already wet with your saliva or other secretions, change the mask already.

Discard used masks appropriately. When in the hospital, discard into yellow bags. If there is no yellow bag within the area, discard into general trash bins. The concept is to discard into a proper bin so that it does not become a new source of transmitting respiratory droplets. The used mask is now considered dirty and loaded with potentially



*infectious droplets. Do not leave on table tops or anywhere that requires another person to clean up after you. Do not put used masks into clean pockets or into handbags--this will contaminate all the items inside the pockets or the bag.*

*Remove the mask touching the ribbons or elastic bands only. Wash hands or use alcohol after discarding the masks.*

- I am a medical student. Will I be assigned to see nCOV patients?

**HICU Answer:** No.

*The students are not part of the current PGH nCoV pathway. There may be special situations we need the help of students under voluntary arrangement, such as for drills or for teaching to stand in as surrogate patients.*

*Students' contributions to design and create posters are always welcome. Ideas and efforts to disseminate accurate information are likewise appreciated.*

- May family travelled to Hong Kong last Christmas. I stayed with them during the Chinese New Year. Should I go on self-quarantine?

**HICU Answer:** *If the family returned to the Philippines after the Christmas holidays--this should be asked, let's say 02 January 2020. The 14-day incubation period ended on 15 January 2020. Assuming no one got ill in the family (this should also be asked in detail), the visit on New Year's weekend 24-26 January 2020 should have been safe and there is no need to go on self-quarantine.*

- I am a faculty at the UPCM. I went to a conference in Tokyo, Japan. Japan reports that they have 20 confirmed cases of the 2019-nCoV infections. Do I need to go on self-quarantine?

**HICU Answer:** *No, it is not required at this time. There is no sustained transmission in Japan, or for any other country outside China and, thus, a visit to countries outside China and its Special Administrative Regions does not constitute a high risk exposure at this time.*

*However, there was a suggestion during one of the dissemination lectures at the PGH (30 January 2020, Science Hall): it was suggested that the persons with recent travel to countries other than China, Hong Kong, and Macau wear surgical mask for 14 days. The wearing of mask for these travelers will be encouraged but on voluntary basis.*

References:

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7. Philippine General Hospital. Implementing Guidelines On The Preparedness And Response To The 2019 Novel Coronavirus Acute Respiratory Disease (2019 nCoV ARD) Updated 02 February 2020.

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