



**COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH**  
**UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES MANILA**  
**SEAMEO TROPMED Philippines**  
*Regional Centre for Public Health, Hospital Administration,  
Environmental and Occupational Health*



**OFFICE OF THE DEAN AND CENTRE DIRECTOR**

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**STATEMENT ON THE COVID-19 SITUATION  
FROM THE DEAN AND CENTRE DIRECTOR**

18 March 2020

Dear members of the UP College of Public Health community,

The Department of Health (DOH) and the Interagency Task Force (IATF) have placed the country under Code Red Sublevel 2, confirming that “sustained community transmission” of COVID-19 has taken place in the country. Worldwide, COVID-19 has been declared as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO). A community quarantine has thus been activated from yesterday until 12 April 2020, thereby imposing checkpoints at all entry points to the National Capital Region, with all land, air and sea travel to and from the NCR restricted until 14 April 2020.

It is clear that we are all moving towards an unprecedented situation.

In response to this, the following efforts and interventions are being implemented, in line with the agreements set by the UP Manila Chancellor's Advisory Committee in its meeting early today.

- 1. Faculty, staff and student monitoring:** We highly encourage students, faculty, REPS, and administrative staff, including non-UP employees in housekeeping and security, who may be in dire need at this time, to report any concerns to their respective faculties-in-charge, department chairs or heads of offices.
- 2. Academic efforts:** The UP System Memorandum OVPAA-20-38 effectively suspends all classes in UP Manila (residential, online and alternative offerings) until 14 April. Nonetheless, due to the uncertainty of the situation thenceforth, faculty are still encouraged to reconfigure their upcoming learning activities to online mode. Guidelines and tools are being made available by the University to assist faculty in this transition. All changes must be reflected in course syllabi, and must be submitted to department chairs and the Assistant to the Dean for Academic Affairs. Students are likewise advised to prepare for the possibility of continuing the rest of the semester through online mode beyond the community quarantine period. Furthermore, all deployment programs and faculty field visits will be postponed to a date beyond the end of the community quarantine period, or until the situation normalizes.
- 3. Research concerns:** Any interaction with human participants in research will be postponed. Research-related travels should also abide by the guidelines set by the University. Principal investigators and their research teams are encouraged to adjust their research plans accordingly, and to discuss with their teams and funders these plans to ensure minimal disruptions in the overall conduct of research.
- 4. Laboratory concerns:** There should be no use of labs by staff or students during this quarantine period. Concerned departments must also develop guidelines on the use of

the laboratories by faculty, staff, and undergraduate and graduate researchers beyond the community quarantine period.

5. **Administrative concerns:** As per UP System Memorandum TJH-20-13, faculty, REPS and staff will continue to operate through work-from-home arrangements for the duration of the community quarantine period, unless sick or indisposed. This thereby significantly limits transactions to those that may be processed online. This will include those hired under contract of service/job order (JO).
6. **Short courses and extension services:** Until the situation normalizes, we are constrained to postpone all short courses and extension services, such as laboratory services. We are encouraging concerned departments to make the necessary adjustments and inform all concerned stakeholders regarding these adjustments.
7. **Formation of the Emerging Infections Task Force:** Last 10 February 2020, the College administration formed the Emerging Infectious Task Force, with all departments of CPH represented. This is a policy-making and advisory body that assists us in forming the guidelines and recommendations on how to proceed with the day-to-day operations of the College. They are also tasked to process updates on the current situation. We thank the Task Force and the Executive Committee, for helping us draft these guidelines and recommendations.

I would also like to emphasize the importance of sharing only verified information, and to act on the expert advice of the DOH and WHO. Wash hands frequently, avoid touching the face, practice cough etiquette, and stay at home as much as possible. If experiencing any fever, cough, weakness or difficulty breathing, please call the DOH COVID-19 Hotline: 02-894-COVID (02-894-26843).

Most importantly, please remain calm.

As we are all navigating within this unprecedented situation, I would like to reassure the community that the College administration is one with the rest of the UP Manila community in putting our collective and individual safety first. We will only be able to overcome these difficulties if we do our own part in protecting ourselves, our loved ones, and the rest of the UP CPH community.

Let us all keep safe and well during this challenging period.

**VICENTE Y. BELIZARIO, JR., MD, MTM&H**  
Dean and Centre Director