Republic of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Region 02

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REGIONAL MEMORANDUM ORDER
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FOR : **ALL PRESIDENTS/HEADS OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HEIs) IN REGION 02**

SUBJECT : **CHED PRESS RELEASE: CHED AND DOH SEEK TO ELIMINATE NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES THROUGH EDUCATION OF PH HEALTH WORKFORCE**

DATE : **MARCH 15, 2021**

The Commission on Higher Education Regional Office 2 hereby disseminates the information in the attached Press Release from **Chairman J. Prospero E. De Vera III**, Commission on Higher Education, HEDC Building, C.P. Garcia Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City, regarding CHED and DOH initiative to equip the country's health workforce with up-to-date information on Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) by integrating such topics in the curricula of Medicine, Nursing, Medical Technology, Midwifery and Physical Therapy programs of the Philippine colleges and universities.

For information and guidance of all concerned.

JULIETA M. PARAS, Ed.D., CESE
Director IV

Encl.: as stated

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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CHED, DOH seek to eliminate neglected tropical diseases through education of PH health workforce

Press Release | 12 March 2021

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Department of Health (DOH) will equip the country's future health workforce with up-to-date information on Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) by integrating it in the curricula of Philippine colleges and universities.

NTDs will be included in the curricula of Medicine, Nursing, Medical Technology, Midwifery, and Physical Therapy courses.

This initiative was launched through the signing of a Joint Memorandum of Agreement between DOH Secretary Francisco T. Duque III, CHED Chairman J. Prospero E. De Vera III and was witnessed by CHED Commissioner Lilian De Las Llagas and DOH Disease Prevention and Control Bureau Medical Officer Leda Hernandez.

"We will all get there. We already have the necessary tools to improve the training of our health professionals. Health and Education are drivers of change through a government that values "Pagbabago, Kaunlaran, Malasakit," De Vera said. "I believe that this undertaking will intensify the areas for linkage between the CHED and DOH, especially in these times that the healthcare delivery system is in a very challenging situation," he added.

Through this agreement, interns will be provided an initial understanding of the different NTDs of public health importance in the country in preparation for their encounters on actual cases and dynamic scenarios in the community.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that more than a billion people around the world suffer from NTDs in a lifetime. They are neglected because they often occur among those living in remote rural areas, urban slums or conflict zones, who have little access to adequate healthcare.

In the Philippines, common NTDs include Lymphatic Filariasis, Schistosomiasis, Soil-Transmitted Helminthiasis, Leprosy, Rabies and Foodborne Trematodiasis.

The good news is that age-old NTDs that have affected humanity for centuries, like Leprosy, Lymphatic Filariasis, and Schistosomiasis, when diagnosed early, are "curable" and, when acted upon collectively by the community, can be "preventable."

"We heard their stories; with the science and experience, we have the opportunity in our hands not to let this happen again in the future," De las Llagas said.

Fulfilling the mandate of the Universal Health Care Law, the Department of Health, together with the Commission on Higher Education, venture into that "strategic shift" of investments and focus from clinical – individual-based curative/rehabilitative services that have been in the school curricula since time, to a progressive, proactive, collective, population-based preventive model. These align with the country's commitments to the Sustainable Development goals of 2030 and the World Health Organization 2030 NTD Roadmap.

"We cannot do it alone. We are grateful to the Commission on Higher Education for sharing the vision and the mandate to reach out to the marginalized, those left behind. Education, ending the neglect of NTDs through Universal Health Care addresses the common purpose of poverty alleviation and development. We will ensure that the right structure is in place to operate and navigate the last years of the NTD Roadmap towards elimination to finish what we have started." Duque said.

A Joint Working Committee between the DOH and CHED will be formed following the agreement to provide policy and technical guidance to the integration, which will be pioneered in strategic areas and state universities where there is evidence of the burden of NTDs. In time, with quality assurance, this will be scaled up to public and private schools around the country for sustainability.

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For more information, you may reach out to DOH and CHED through the following contact persons:

CHERRIE MELANIE ANCHETA-DIEGO, CESO III
Director IV
Office of Programs and Standard Development
Commission on Higher Education
Tel. (02) 8441-12-28
E-mail: opsd2019@ched.gov.ph

LEDA M. HERNANDEZ, MD, MPH
Division Chief
Infectious Diseases for Elimination Division
Department of Health
Tel. (02) 8651-7800 local 2352
E-mail: dr_ledamher@yahoo.com