

MULA KAY

Isang selor...

Marami tayong pinagdaanang hirap dahil sa COVID-19 at marami pa tayong mga pagsubok na kailangang harapin patungo sa "new normal". Tulad ng isang higad na nasa loob ng kanyang bahay, may paghihirap na daranasin ito bago makalabas bilang isang marikit na paruparo.

Ang pagbubukas ng *Out Patient Department* (OPD) ay isang senyas na ang "new normal" ay sinimulan na sa PGH. Sa pamamagitan ng *Online Consultation Request and Appointment* (OCRA) System, maari na nating pagsilbihan ang mahigit 500,000 pasyente ng OPD. Ang kahalagahan ng tuloy-tuloy na pagkonsulta ay binigyang diin sa TVUP episode, "*Continuing Care for the nonCOVID Patients*".

Dahil sa wala pang gamot o bakuna para sa COVID-19, mas naging makabuluhan ang kasabihang "*prevention is better than cure*". Iyan ang buod ng artikulo ng College of Public Health kung saan ginagamit ang *public health approach* sa pagtalakay ng mga suliraning pangkalusugan ng bansa. Lalo na sa gitna ng *lockdown at physical distancing*, ang paraang Tele-Public Health ay magiging epektibo mula Luzon hanggang Mindanao.

Lahat ng aspeto ng paggaling ay ating pinagtutuunan ng pansin. Nariyan ang mga donasyon ng pagkain para sa mga healthcare workers na inaasikaso ng *Bayanihan Na!* Operations Center at PGH Dietary Department. Ang UP Agape naman ay 'di nagpapabaya sa pagbibigay ng espirituwal na sustansya para sa lahat; habang ang mga mag-aaral ng UP Medical Students for Social Responsibility ay masigasig sa pagkakatag ng mahahalagang impormasyon sa pamamagitan ng kanilang *network* kasabay ng patuloy nilang pag-aaral.

Marahil ay sipat na ang pagdating ng liwanag at ito ang nag-udyok kay Prof. Agapito upang sumulat ng tulang, "*Alay sa mga Frontliners*". Ang lahat sa ating komunidad ay talagang nabubuhayan ng loob at hindi patatalo sa COVID tulad ng ibinahagi nina Mishima Miciano at Joy Memorando.

Hindi natin alam kung bakit dumating ang salot na COVID-19 sa mundo; ngunit may pananalig tayo sa isang Maykapal na lumikha ng magagandang paruparo. Dahil dito, ang UP Manila ay hindi manlulumo; bagkus ay buong lakas na aahon bilang katiwala ng Panginoon sa "new normal"!

Tele-Public Health: Ensuring Health Beyond Borders



Camarines Norte State College puts up its isolation units with guidelines developed by UP CPH faculty and CHED using Tele-Public Health.

"Prevention is better than cure." In the era of the "new normal" spurred by COVID-19, the importance of this motto is appreciated even more by governments and institutions due to the high cost of curative measures to control the spread of the pandemic. The impact of COVID-19 on the economy has reached unprecedented scale and amid dwindling resources, prevention has become not only a strategy but a necessity.

This situation has forced governments and agencies to implement preventive approaches to limiting the spread of COVID-19. Initially relying on recommendations from the World Health Organization and Department of Health, they soon realized the importance of technical expertise in developing strategies applicable to their unique settings, which may not be sufficiently covered by generalized guidelines. These concerns fall within the field of public health, defined as the "art and science of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through organized efforts."

Health professionals working in clinical fields have resorted to

telemedicine to continue seeing patients, without having to interact with them in person. In these cases, a teleconference or a web app-based conversation may suffice. But what about agencies that would need to consult on appropriate prevention strategies to halt the spread of COVID-19?

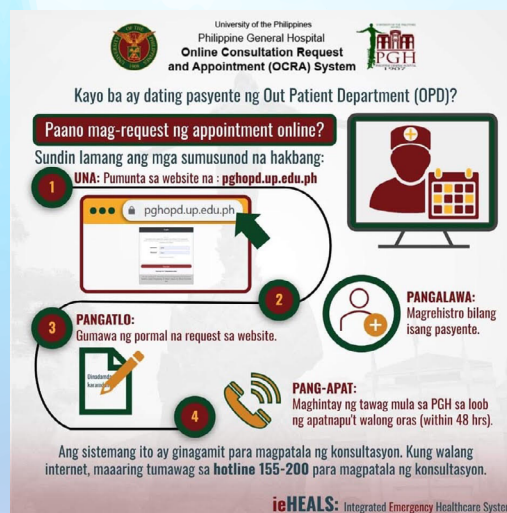
Enter an approach similar to telemedicine but aims to prevent disease and potentially save millions of lives each time: Tele-Public Health.

Tele-Public Health is the use of telecommunication techniques implemented over a distance for purposes of 1) *sharing public health expertise for the benefit of policy makers and service providers* and 2) *providing health education for the public*. This definition significantly differs from a closely similar term, Telehealth, which is defined by the International Organization for Standardization as "the use of telecommunication techniques for the purpose of providing telemedicine, medical education, and health education over a distance" but within the context of a health provider-patient relationship.

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With the country just emerging from the ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic, the clamor to resume outpatient services is becoming more insistent. The UP-PGH *Bayanihan Na!* Operations Center (BNOC) hotline 155-200, which was initially meant for COVID-related matters, eventually also served as a means to assist patients whose treatment had been abruptly interrupted due to the lockdown. By their own initiative, knowing the patients' travails and suffering brought about by the discontinued health care, the various clinical departments attempted to restore some semblance of consultation services by establishing their own brand of telemedicine utilizing the platforms that were most accessible to their patients.

Now that the lockdown is being lifted gradually, the Outpatient Department (OPD) needs to reopen by phases, too. It is evident that the OPD processes will have to adhere to the basic principles to avoid disease transmission – wearing of face masks, physical distancing, and limiting face



OPD Goes Online! Welcome to OCRA

to face contact, being the top priorities. Telemedicine, which was slow to evolve in the country, is now favored to reduce the need for patients to go to the health facility and possibly contract infectious diseases. Hence, the PGH, in collaboration with the UP Department of Industrial Engineering, developed the Online Consultation Request and Appointment (OCRA) System – a platform accessed through the website pghopd.up.edu.ph. There

are step-by-step instructions that will guide patients on how to schedule appointments with the concerned departments.

Patients who have limited or no access to internet may still call the hotline 155-200 to register for appointments. A 48-hour grace period is requested to ensure proper triaging and the patients will be notified of their schedules within that time frame. Even requests for schedules of laboratory tests, radiologic examinations, and Medical Social Service evaluations can be made via the OCRA.

The OCRA hopes to achieve a seamless scheduling and appointment system, resulting in markedly improved waiting times and better service to the PGH patients. This is but a part of the so-called "New Normal" that we expect to take place in the post-pandemic era. We are indebted to our friends from the UP Department of Industrial Engineering for sharing their expertise in creating this wonderful tool. **Dr. Esther Saguil**



The *Kalusugan ay Karapatan* series being produced and broadcast by TVUP imparts vital information on health issues. Ongoing is production and streaming of episodes on COVID-19-related topics hosted by **UPM Chancellor Dr. Carmencita Padilla**. Episode 3 in this series tackled the topic, "[Continuing Care for the Non-COVID Patients](#)" with **Dr. Lorna Abad**, PGH Dept

of Pediatrics Chair and **Dr. John Anonuevo**, PGH Dept of Internal Medicine Chair as resource persons.

Dr. Padilla introduced the program by saying that the pandemic has focused attention on treating the COVID-19 patients and that the growing number of cases each day has left our health system overburdened and unable to operate effectively to deal with both infectious and noncommunicable illnesses which are still persistent health problems, in addition to preventive medicine and well child care.

Dr. Anonuevo identified ischemic heart diseases, cancer, uncontrolled diabetes, gastrointestinal bleeding, and those needing hemodialysis as

the cases that PGH continues to manage even after becoming COVID-19 referral center. For pediatrics, Dr. Abad listed cancer, bleeding due to liver diseases, epilepsy, severe dehydration due to gastroenteritis, and problematic newborns as the urgent cases that the Department takes care of at this time.

Challenges

The two speakers mentioned similar challenges faced by the non-COVID patients and doctors during this time of the "new normal". Patients' fear of going to the hospital is a big challenge. Even if severely sick, patients hesitated to go to the hospital for fear of getting the COVID-19.

For the doctors, Dr. Anonuevo described the difficulty in

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As the “back end” to the frontlines, the UP-PGH Bayanihan Na! Operations Center (BNOC) works as a call center where donations and patient queries are handled. It was set up with amazing speed and has been operating through the efforts of volunteers: medical interns, faculty, students, and even alumni. Volunteer preparation was just as fast. I signed up a day after attending an orientation by Chancellor Padilla via Zoom. By 31 March, the second day of operations and after training for less than an hour, I was seated and nervously awaiting my first caller.

It was a new experience for all of us, to call ourselves “agents” instead of “teachers” or “students.” We thought, so this is what it’s like to work at a call center! While up and running, operations were continually evolving as problems came up. On my first day, I learned that a new online data form would replace a one-day old form to deal with what was then a huge “problem” – the flood of food donations. In the following weeks, new scripts had to be added for new concerns.

Amazingly, donors came up with nearly impossible finds: personal protective equipment (PPEs), N-95 respirators, and so many gallons of alcohol made their way to Alvir Hall. There were other things like mattresses and even a month’s supply of pet food – for the frontliners’ furry friends, the donor insisted. These came from all sorts of people, from all walks of life: big and small businesses, fraternities, universities, NGOs, professional associations, school batches, students, private individuals both local and overseas, politicians, “barkadas”, and even from one “Anonymous Friend of PGH”.

Much more interesting were stories sneaked in by some callers: bureaucratic hurdles to get PPEs from Taiwan; small group of friends



on sandwich wrappers, food boxes, and face shields—each one a handcrafted prayer and a gesture of goodwill.

A View from the Back End

pooling their funds; and patients of kind PGH doctors wanting to give back. A lady wanted to donate her late father’s hospital bed.

There were words of encouragement sneaked in everywhere. Notes saying, “Thank you frontliners! God bless and keep safe!” and Bible verses were stuck

Taken together, this vignettes of different people, different means, and different strengths composed a picture of the *Bayanihan* spirit that gave the call center its name. From the frontlines to the back end, we all move forward, carrying our one great burden.

Mishima Z. Miciano, CAS with Prof. Joy Memorando, UPCD

Responding to the Call to be Socially Responsible



With the limitations and mobility restrictions brought about by the region-wide community quarantine, the members of the UP Medical Students for Social Responsibility (UP MSSSR) have been responding to the pandemic situation in more modern ways. Through its network of affiliated organizations such as the Asian Medical Students’ Association Philippines (AMSA-Philippines) and International Federation of Medical Students’ Associations (IFMSA), UP MSSSR members got to participate in initiatives and further their learning as well.

Participating in their capacity as MSSSR members, the students helped in widening the reach of AMSA-Philippines’ online campaign series that counters fake

news and misinformation about COVID-19 and the community quarantine. This was done through its public-friendly and digestible posts on different social networking sites that were translated in several regional languages and dialects of the Philippines. The same campaign series provided tips on taking care of one’s mental health in light of the “new normal.” Apart from countering the widespread *infodemic*, members also joined the Luzon Crisis Assistance Team organized by fellow medical students and disseminated their calls for donations and posts supporting healthcare workers and frontliners. Through the IFMSA, members were also able to participate in webinars to further their learning about the different aspects affected by the pandemic, **TURN TO PAGE 6...**

Food from Heaven

When the Philippine General Hospital (PGH) as a COVID-19 Referral Center and UPPGH *Bayanihan Na!* Operations Center (BNOC) opened simultaneously on March 30, 2020, a massive donation



campaign for essential hospital equipment and back-of-house operational needs, including food, was also launched. Food donation drive was necessary due to the difficulty in securing food during the lockdown and the increased number of frontliners who will serve in the COVID-19 wards and BNOC volunteers who will serve 24/7.

But even before the above projects started and since the imposition of the Luzon Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) last 16 March, the call for support for healthcare workers of UP-PGH has been receiving tremendous response in the form of food and beverage donations from the community. From day one, the medical frontliners have been receiving much attention and care from a grateful nation, willing to be part of the COVID fight in its own thoughtful and generous way. From home-cooked hot rice meals, bottled water, fruit juices, sweets, desserts, pastries, breads, milk teas, hot coffee, fast food meals, pizzas, cakes, biscuits, ice cream, snacks, fresh fruits and vegetables, canned food products, and the list goes on; foodstuffs kept on coming.

Currently, the BNOC takes the calls from donors and strategically schedules delivery throughout the day and week to avoid food wastage. Distribution to the different hospital staff is centralized with the help of the PGH Dietary Department under the able supervision of its head, Ms. Amelita Lavilla. The healthcare workers are very appreciative of these delectable meals which nourish them; but what strengthens them more is the overwhelming support of the public that they feel.

From the selfless frontliners of PGH and the whole UP Manila community, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all the individuals, groups, and food establishments who have and continue to provide us with nourishment and love.

Dr. Scarlett Mia Tabuñar

TELE-PUBLIC HEALTH...

Elements of Tele-Public Health have been seen in the past to assist health officials in epidemic-stricken areas to manage contact tracing and mapping of disease clusters, in an area dubbed as tele-epidemiology. Now, as the “new normal” redefines the way essential public health functions are being carried out, there is a need to reimagine how a Tele-Public Health approach can be applied in other fields within public health, and in many jurisdictions at once, thereby transcending borders that are heavily guarded due to still-implemented quarantines or lockdowns.

Furthermore, there will be a need to rethink how agencies implement occupational health policies in workplaces, and how health systems ensure continued implementation of maternal and child health programs and address persistent health challenges such as lack of access to clean water and sanitation, non-communicable diseases, mental health, vector-borne diseases, vaccine preventable diseases, soil-transmitted helminthiasis, and schistosomiasis.

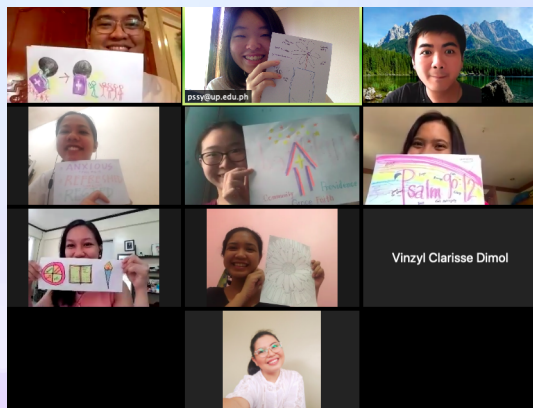
Already, in keeping with its public service mandate, UP Manila has undertaken efforts in implementing Tele-Public Health through its College of Public Health (CPH), also designated as SEAMEO TROPMED Philippines. A collaboration between CPH and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) commenced with the formation of a Public Health Experts Group (PHEG) that developed guidelines for the establishment of Community Isolation Units (CIUs) in state universities and colleges (SUCs), which were tapped by local government units (LGUs) in a bid to isolate patients with confirmed mild infection and contacts for quarantine. Since each SUC is different, and so is the LGU involved, the PHEG has met with concerned SUC and LGU officials from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao for further guidance on setting up and managing their CIUs as well as on addressing other major public health concerns.

Another continuing effort is the tie-up between the CPH and the DOH in delivering webinars to the Doctors to the Barrios, who are currently deployed in 160 municipalities and health facilities nationwide and are pursuing their Master of Public Health studies. This activity, coupled with continuing engagement between them and CPH faculty, has shown the importance of capacity building while also fostering a sense of community, a dimension that is less felt in existing telemedicine ventures.

Tele-Public Health, while still new as an approach to doing public health, already demonstrates the importance of merging elements of advocacy, capacity-building and knowledge sharing for the benefit of policy makers, service providers and the public, while also building a sense of community. Amid the need to put up physical boundaries, Tele-Public Health presents a promising way forward on how to prevent disease, prolong life, and promote health in the “new normal.” [References](#)

Dean Vicente Belizario, Jr. and Jaifred C. F. Lopez

Operation Jabez: UP Agape's COVID-19 Response



Operation Jabez (OJ) is UP Agape's response to COVID-19. Originally a medical mission, OJ has become an online project which aims to provide encouragement and spiritual support to the UPCM and PGH community and to as many as can be reached by our organization's Facebook page, UP Agape.

Five sub-projects are under OJ: Cup of Courage, OJ Daily Prayer Points, Thoughtful Tuesdays, Agatoons, and Agamemes. **Cup of Courage (CoC)** provides encouragement through verses with short captions that we upload every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. CoC also features real life stories of our alumni frontliners to inspire readers.

OJ Daily Prayer Points has a Telegram group where we post daily prayer points on Government, Patients, Frontliners, Filipino People, Churches, and Other Countries. Members of the group commit to praying for all these concerns daily.

Thoughtful Tuesdays is a weekly online event where we do online prayer meetings or host online talks. We already had three online talks: Dr. Nash Daniel Silava on "The Hope that We have", Dr. Jabesse Esther Miguel on "When a Loving God 'Delays' your Plans," and Dr. Jana Mier-Alpaño on "ECQ Feelings".

Agatoons is a monthly short comics release which aims to encourage others during these hard lonesome times. We hope to introduce God's love and hope to all our readers and to remind them that they are not alone; that God is here amongst us as our pillar of support, especially in this time of uncertainty.

ALAY SA MGA FRONTLINERS

Sa grabeng pandemyang kinakaharap ng bansa
Ating bigyang pugay frontliners na nagkukusa
Libu-libong manggagamot, lab personnel, at narses
'Di alintana ang panganib ng COVID-19 illnesses.

Dahil nakakahawa ang sakit na COVID-19
Alam nilang ang panganib ay tiyak at malalim
Kahit pa may pananggalang na puwedeng gamitin
Mga *Personal Protective Equipment* na mahirap suotin.

Subalit 'di alinta buhay nilang nanganganib
Nangunguna ang pagnanasa at dedikasyon sa dibdib
Taos-pusong serbisyo ang inihahatid
Kahit pa buhay nila ang maibuwis.

Kasama dito ang lahat ng nagtatrabaho
Sa mga pagamutan, klinika at laboratoryo
Silang nagsusuri kung may COVID-19 mismo
Lahat din ng mga kawaning nag-aasikaso.

'Di man kayang maisaisa ang ginagampanan
O 'di man kayang masukat ang kahalagahan
Paano nga ba natin sila papahalagahan?
Para sa kanilang tulong sa ating lipunan.

Marami tayong maaring magawa para sa kanila
Suplay ng PPE's ay tuloy-tuloy naman sana
'Yung may kalidad at protektado kapag ginamit na
Hindi na sana nila hihingin bagkus ay handa na.

Narapat ding sila'y dagdagan ng sweldo
Para maramdaman nila na may pagbabago
Dahil talaga namang sila ay nagsasakripisyo
Marapat lamang na sila'y mabigyan ng kunswelo.

Marami pang ibang pupuwedeng gawin
Mga units para lisensya sa PRC ay ma-renew din
Mga *overtime at leave with pay* nila ay karakang ayusin
Iba pang benepisyong dapat ibigay ng gobyerno natin

Bilang pagpupugay sa kanilang nangunguna
Malaking tulong kung ipagdarasal sila
Isang alay sa kanila na walang makakakuha
Kundi ang Diyos na magbibigay gantimpala sa nagawa nila.

Prof. Josephine D. Agapito, CAS

Agamemes is a small project. It sprinkles some lighthearted and reassuring comedy on people's timeline on our new satellite page, "Jabez Memes for Land-Expanding Teens." Given the negativity in social media, it is our hope that through the posts here which are relatable, encouraging, and evangelistic, these memes will be rays of light and hope during these times.

In addition to all these, UP Agape gave cash donation to the UPCM-led PPE Support drive for frontliners. **Abraham Siano**

RESPONDING TO THE CALL TO BE SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE...

such as human rights, public health, and even medical education.

As an organization, UP MSSR has joined initiatives such as Scientists Unite Against COVID-19 to call for mass testing in the Philippines and partnered with other organizations like The Youth Initiative, Project Salu-Salo, and UP Red Cross Youth to help support and spread their calls for donations.

Through the above projects, the members respond to the organization's call to be socially responsible while being globally competent and locally engaged as UP MSSR members and as UP medical students.

Pamela Pasco

9 May 2020

5 PILLARS GUIDELINES FOR RE-ENTRY TO GCQ

1. HAND HYGIENE

Sanitize your hands everytime you go in and out of a group environment, and every couple of hours while you're in it

Disinfect high-touch surfaces frequently

2. PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Stand the prescribed distance apart on escalators and elevator lines

Allow no more than 6 people on elevators that used to carry 20

Turn up many internal meetings, patient visits, and team huddles into video meetings

Put up barriers if face-to-face encounters can't be avoided

3. MONITOR

Daily screening of all employees, patients, and visitors for symptoms of COVID-19

4. WEAR MASKS

Wear masks in and out of the hospital

5. CULTURE CHANGE

We should all do all of the above rigorously and thoroughly

Embrace the culture/desire to "keep others safe, not just ourselves."

BAYANIHAN NA!
ALUNIN NATING ANG COVID-19!

COVID-19

CONFIRMED

81

CURRENTLY ADMITTED

Mild 20
Moderate 44
Severe 11
Critical 6

COVID-19

PROBABLE

3

CURRENTLY ADMITTED

Mild 0
Moderate 0
Severe 0
Critical 2

COVID-19

SUSPECT

10

CURRENTLY ADMITTED

Mild 1
Moderate 6
Severe 1
Critical 2

COVID-19

TOTAL

94

CURRENTLY ADMITTED

Mild 21
Moderate 51
Severe 12
Critical 10

RUNNING TOTALS
(since Feb 5, 2020)

EXPIRED
64

ADMISSIONS
405

UP-PGH HCW
(since March 30, 2020)

Total HCWs Tested in All Areas 2706

Total (+) 114

From COVID Wards: 50
Doctors: 11
Nurses: 38
Others: 1

From Elsewhere: 64
Doctors: 15
Nurses: 36
Others: 13

COVID-19 (+)

RECOVERED + IMPROVED **305**

Discharged 240

8 JUNE 2020

UP-PGH COVID-19 DAILY REPORT

CONTINUING CARE FOR NON-COVID-19 PATIENTS...

examining patients because of the need for personal protective equipment. The doctor has to be meticulous so as not to potentially infect himself or the patient. Adult and pediatric consultations now would be on strictly by appointment scheduling and use of telemedicine is emphasized.

Asking toddlers to wear mask is difficult and this situation exposes healthcare workers (HCWs) to the risk of infection as children may have non-specific symptoms of the virus.

Another challenge during this pandemic is the emotional toll on HCW. Some do not want to go home to their families for fear of exposing their loved ones to the virus.

Staying healthy

No matter how old the patient is, to have a good fighting chance against the coronavirus, staying healthy is the key. The doctors' advice can be summarized as: good nutrition, exercise, enough sleep (7-9 hours), and healthy mental state.

For children— eat plenty of

vegetables, fruits, and high protein food such as meat, fish, eggs, and milk for babies; take vitamins especially Vitamin C and zinc; have at least 8 hours of sleep daily; and exercise. Avoid processed and junk food. The older children and teenagers should limit use of gadgets and engage in more fruitful activities inside the home.

In addition, Dr. Anonuevo urged patients to avoid depression by staying connected with family and reducing exposure to anxiety-provoking news and replacing this with productive activities. Dr. Abad lamented the increased number of cases of violence at the PGH Child Protection Unit which was probably caused by build-up of tension and anxiety in the family. There are help lines available for the public; and for HCW, she cited the Department's I CARE program where mentors look after their mentees. She stressed that it is not only patients who need mental health assistance but also the HCWs.

They also stated the importance of taking maintenance medicines regularly for existing illnesses such as hypertension and diabetes; and having the indicated vaccinations. Dr. Abad emphasized the importance of complying with

the child's regular immunization schedule to avoid infection and increase resistance. Dr. Anonuevo explained that the regular flu vaccine will not prevent COVID-19, but should be given to 65 year olds and above or those with illnesses like diabetes provided there are no contraindications.

Advice to the general public

Dr. Anonuevo reiterated the importance of physical distancing, use of masks, and proper handwashing; and keeping oneself healthy with good food, enough sleep, and regular exercise. Next he admonished everyone to seek consult via the UP-PGH *Bayanihan Na!* Hotline 155-200 for any complaints or go to the emergency room if symptoms are severe.

Dr. Abad added to the basic health advice above, admonitions such as: avoiding hugs and kisses to children by adults and isolating our elderlies, limiting the use of gadgets to two hours and engaging in other productive activities like reading and drawing, and complying with their immunization schedules. Lastly, both doctors reemphasized the basic strategies to maintain mental health in these stressful times.

Cynthia Villamor