



**World Health
Organization**

Western Pacific
Philippines



DOH, WHO launch Hepatitis B project in Bataan and Pampanga

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23 August, Bataan – The Department of Health, Central Luzon Center for Health Development and World Health Organization are launching a demonstration project for Hepatitis B in the Provinces of Bataan, Pampanga, and Angeles City. The project will provide Hepatitis B services at the primary level for early diagnosis and treatment and strengthen service delivery through a referral system to address the needs of those with cirrhosis, liver cancer and other co-infections.

“With 10.4% of the adult population estimated to have chronic Hepatitis B infection, this feat is another legacy for the full realization of our Universal Health Care. The provision of comprehensive cascade of services from testing to treatment of Hepatitis B will aid in the prevention of complications and control of future infections, and it is our great pleasure that Central Luzon will lead the way,” asserted by DOH-CL CHD Regional Director Dr Cesar C. Cassion.

Hepatitis B is a viral infection caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV) that can lead to either acute or chronic disease. Chronic Hepatitis B infection can later develop into liver cirrhosis or liver cancer. Around 1 in 10 people in the Philippines are estimated to have Hepatitis B but many of them may not know their status.

Bataan Governor Albert S. Garcia reiterated, “This endeavour is yet another huge leap towards our vision of Bataeños having the highest human development index in the country, and that is ensuring healthy and productive citizenry. Hence, on behalf of the health care workers implementing this demonstration project as spearheaded by our Provincial Health Office, our heartfelt gratitude for

once again choosing our province, and our undying support and active participation is ensured for its sustainability”.

“With millions of Filipinos affected by hepatitis, the Philippines needs to step up its investment for viral hepatitis. We are honoured to support this project with the Department of Health so we show the impact of having these Hepatitis B services accessible at the heart of the community to those who need it,” said acting WHO Representative to the Philippines Dr Rajendra Yadav. “This is just the beginning. We will continue to work with the DOH to adopt the success of this Hepatitis B project nationwide.”

Hepatitis B is most commonly transmitted from mother to child during birth and delivery, as well as through contact with blood or other body fluids, sexual contact, and needlestick injury. While there is no cure for Hepatitis B, there is antiviral treatment that can reduce the viral load and slow the progression of cirrhosis, improving life expectancy and quality of life.

The demonstration project will provide treatment after screening and assessment of Hepatitis B status of patients. It aims for universal health coverage of the population in need of services and finding the missing millions with Hepatitis B in the country. This demonstration project will also be implemented in selected areas of Metro Manila, providing the evidence and operational guidance for a national scale up of the Viral Hepatitis B Program. The Department of Health is leading this effort with the support of WHO and with the local government units to reach more people living with Hepatitis B in the Philippines.