

[EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 168, May 26, 2014]

**CREATING THE INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE FOR THE
MANAGEMENT OF EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES IN THE
PHILIPPINES**

WHEREAS, Article II, Section 15 of the Constitution provides that the State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them;

WHEREAS, Section 2, Chapter 1, Title IX, Book IV of the Administrative Code of 1987 provides that the primary function of the Department of Health (DOH) is the promotion, protection, preservation or restoration of the health of the people through the provision and delivery of health services and through the regulation and encouragement of providers of health goods and services;

WHEREAS, the emergence of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), Avian Influenza, Ebola, and the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) infections have been acknowledged by the global community to cause potential public health emergencies of international concern;

WHEREAS, there are recurrent threats of other diseases, such as Meningococemia, Leptospirosis, Antimicrobial Resistance of Tuberculosis, and other bacterial, viral and parasitic diseases that contribute to the high incidence of infectious diseases in the country;

WHEREAS, the international proliferation of these diseases persist due to increased globalization and mobility of travelers and products, and thus, threatens the lives and safety of Filipinos both here and abroad, as well as the Philippine economy in general; and

WHEREAS, in the event that any or a combination of these diseases result in multi-country outbreaks that can lead to epidemics and even a worldwide pandemic, there is a need for an inter-sectoral collaboration to establish preparedness and ensure efficient government response to assess, monitor, contain, control, and prevent the spread of any potential epidemic in the Philippines.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BENIGNO S. AQUINO III, President of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by law, do hereby order:

SECTION 1. Creation and Composition. The Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (EID), hereinafter referred to as the "Task Force," is hereby created, to be composed of representatives from the following:

Chairperson : Department of Health (DOH)
Members : Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA)
Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG)

Department of Justice (DOJ)
Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)
Department of Tourism (DOT)
Department of Transportation and Communications
(DOTC)

The Task Force may call upon any department, bureau, office, agency or instrumentality of the government, including Government-Owned or -Controlled Corporations (GOCCs), government financial institutions (GFIs), local government units (LGUs), non-government organizations (NGOs) and the private sector for assistance as the circumstances and exigencies may require.

Further, the DOH Secretary may recommend to the President the enlistment of the Armed Forces of the Philippines to supplement the Philippine National Police and other law enforcement agencies for the purpose of enforcing the quarantine of specific areas or facilitating the transport of EID patients, and for such other purposes for the effective implementation of this Order.

The duly authorized representatives of the member-agencies of the Task Force shall have a rank not lower than Assistant Secretary.

SECTION 2. Functions. The Task Force shall have the following functions:

- a) Establish a system to identify, screen, and assist Filipinos suspected or confirmed to be infected with EID;
- b) Prevent and/or minimize the entry of suspected or confirmed patients with EID into the country. This should include rigid screening and identification of EID suspects, and the institutionalization of a surveillance, alert, and quarantine system in all ports of entry;
- c) Prevent and/or minimize the local spread of EID in the country through the establishment or reinforcement of a system in screening possible patients infected with EID, contact tracing, identification of the mode of exposure to the virus, and implementation of effective quarantine and proper isolation procedures;
- d) Prevent and/or minimize mortality through effective clinical management by capacitating healthcare facilities, government and private medical practitioners, healthcare workers, and public safety enforcers;
- e) Educate the public on EID and its prevention, control and management to promote positive health behaviors, and address public fear and anxiety through the conduct of a nationwide EID awareness campaign;
- f) Adopt measures to strengthen the Emerging and Re-Emerging Infectious Diseases Program of the DOH or its equivalent in other local health units;
- g) Notify the WHO of the EID cases in the country and its assessment of the EID situation;
- h) Submit to the Office of the President regular status reports in the monitoring of EID;
- i) Formulate, develop, implement, and oversee the EID Preparedness Manual for the prevention and control of EID; and