

MALACAÑANG

MANILA

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 201

**DEFINING THE POWERS, FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN RESPONSE TO THE SEVERE ACUTE
RESPIRATORY SYNDROME CONTAGION**

WHEREAS, due to the outbreak of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome from China which has rapidly spread to twenty-seven (27) countries, most of which are in Asia, the Philippines is in danger of being affected adversely by the contagion unless bold, preemptive, active and immediate steps are taken;

WHEREAS, in the event that the epidemic can no longer be prevented, there is equally the necessity to institute such measures as would confine, restrict or otherwise prevent the further spread of the epidemic;

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.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO, President of the Republic of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by law, do hereby order:

SECTION 1. *Assignment of Primary Responsibility.* – The Secretary of Health is hereby designated as the Crisis Manager for the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) contagion.

SECTION 2. *Powers and Functions.* – The Secretary of Health is hereby granted such powers and authority as would be necessary in order to contain, control, prevent and otherwise restrict the spread of SARS in the country until such time that the he shall declare that the SARS contagion is no longer a threat to the public health.

Specifically, the Secretary of Health shall exercise such powers necessary and incidental to ensure the following:

- a. Prevention and/or minimization of the entry of imported SARS cases into the country which includes rigid screening and identification of SARS suspects and the institutionalization of a surveillance, alert and quarantine system in all ports of entry;
- b. Prevention and/or minimization of the local spread of SARS in the country through the establishment or reinforcement of an efficient triage system, continuous contact tracing and the creation of SARS Outbreak Response Teams for screening of possible SARS cases and the implementation of effective quarantine and proper isolation procedures, including community containment measures;

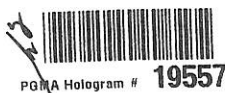


- c. Prevention and/or minimization of mortality through Effective Clinical Management of possible SARS cases which entails capacity building on medical management and diagnosis among government and private medical practitioners, creation and movement of medical and paramedical pools to augment staffing of identified SARS facilities, designation of public health facilities as SARS referral and isolation centers, strengthening capacity in regions as referral centers for isolation of SARS suspects, and clinical and laboratory research as needed;
- d. Education of the public on SARS and its prevention, control and management to promote positive health behaviors and address public fear and anxiety through the conduct of a nationwide SARS awareness campaign; and
- e. In coordination with the appropriate agencies, mitigation of the non-health consequences of SARS, particularly on tourism, trade and industry, labor and employment, deployment of overseas Filipino workers and others.

SECTION 3. *Assistance and Support.* – The Secretary of Health is hereby empowered to call upon all agencies of the Government for assistance in the implementation of this Executive Order, including, but not limited to, the following:

- a. Department of the Interior and Local Government;
- b. Department of Foreign Affairs;
- c. Department of Transportation and Communications;
- d. Department of Education;
- e. Department of Labor and Employment;
- f. Department of Tourism;
- g. Department of Trade and Industry;
- h. Department of Social Welfare and Development;
- i. Bureau of Immigration;
- j. Air Transportation Office;
- k. Manila International Airport Authority and all other airport and seaport authorities;
- l. National Security Council; and
- m. Office of the Press Secretary.

The Secretary of Health is likewise empowered to enlist the support of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Philippine Coast Guard for the purpose of enforcing the quarantine of a certain area or facilitating the transport and conduction of SARS patients to SARS referral centers or otherwise for the effective implementation of this Executive Order.



All agencies of the Government are hereby directed to provide the Department of Health any and all information which may prevent or minimize the entry and spread of SARS in the country.

SECTION 4. *Funding.* – An amount not exceeding One Billion Pesos (P1,000,000,000.00) is hereby set aside from the funds of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office to cover the financial requirements of this Executive Order.

SECTION 5. *Classification of SARS as a Quarantinable Disease.* – Due to its highly contagious nature and considering the danger it poses to public health, SARS is hereby classified as a quarantinable disease.

SECTION 6. *Examination and Surveillance of Vessels and Aircraft and Quarantine.* – Until otherwise declared by the Secretary of Health, the examination of incoming and outgoing vessels and aircraft, surveillance over sanitary conditions, including the detention, isolation, and quarantine of passengers, crews, cargoes and all personal effects found and passing through all ports and airports of entry in the Philippines, and the issuance of quarantine certificates, bills of health or other equivalent documents shall be vested in the Bureau of Quarantine and International Health Surveillance (BQIHS). The BQIHS shall continue to exercise its powers and functions vested upon it under existing laws, rules and regulations, subject to the control and supervision of the Secretary of Health.

SECTION 7. *Treatment and Containment of SARS.* – The Secretary of Health, or his duly designated representative, shall promulgate such rules and regulations relative to containing, treating, and otherwise managing the treatment and condition of SARS in hospitals, health centers, quarantine areas, and such other areas where persons with SARS are found or have been isolated with due regard to the health and well-being of the victims and all those in contact with them, including the communities within the vicinity.

SECTION 8. *Authority of the Department of Education.* – The Secretary of Education shall have the authority to order the closure of schools, institutions of learning, vocational, technical or otherwise, including that of private institutions of learning, or the suspension of classes, or otherwise utilize such buildings and edifices for purposes of containing or managing the SARS epidemic, when so determined and upon the advice of the Secretary of Health. When circumstances so warrant, dissemination of information, health warnings and advisories shall be part of his duties and functions throughout the duration of the crisis.

SECTION 9. *Authority of the Department of the Interior and Local Government.* – The Secretary of the Interior and Local Government, upon the recommendation of the Secretary of Health, shall mobilize the PNP and



prevent profiteering activities and other unscrupulous practices which are inimical to the public.

SECTION 14. *Responsibilities of the Bureau of Immigration.* – The Bureau of Immigration (BI) shall conduct strict arrival and departure inspections including secondary inspections on passengers going to and coming from SARS-affected countries. The BI shall maintain complete arrival and departure records of passengers arriving from and departing for SARS-affected countries and provide the Secretary of Health such information as he may require.

SECTION 15. *Responsibilities of the Office of the National Security Adviser and the National Security Council Secretariat.* – The Office of the National Security Adviser and the National Security Council Secretariat shall assist the Secretary of Health through: (a) the coordination of the national intelligence community in the task of gathering and evaluating information on the SARS threat; and (b) the sharing of strategic assessments on the said threat.

SECTION 16. *Responsibility of the Office of the Press Secretary and its Bureaus and Attached Agencies.* – The Office of the Press Secretary and its bureaus and attached agencies shall support the SARS awareness campaign of the Department of Health.

SECTION 17. *Responsibility of Philippine Health Insurance Corporation.* – The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation shall develop an insurance package for public health workers to assist them in defraying the cost of their hospitalization and other related medical expenses in the event that they develop SARS while in the performance of their duty.

SECTION 18. *Sanctions and Penalties.* – Any violation or infraction of the lawful directives and orders emanating from the duly designated authorities shall be punished in accordance with law and all applicable rules and regulations related thereto.

SECTION 19. *Effectivity.* – This Executive Order shall take effect immediately upon approval.

Done in the City of Manila, this 26th day of April in the year of our Lord, two thousand and three.

By the President:


ALBERTO G. ROMULO
Executive Secretary

