



PRESS RELEASE

MJBA-041-2009

FILIPINO-AMERICAN COMMUNITY URGED TO TAKE PRECAUTIONS

Los Angeles, 30 April 2009 – The World Health Organization (WHO) has raised the influenza pandemic alert to Phase 5, the declaration of which is a strong signal that a pandemic is imminent and that the time to finalize the organization, communication and implementation of the planned mitigation measures is short. WHO advised all countries to immediately activate their pandemic preparedness plans.

In light of this development, the Department of Foreign Affairs advised the public to take all necessary health precautions when traveling to Mexico.

All Filipinos traveling to Mexico are advised to avoid large crowds, shaking hands, kissing people as a greeting, and using the subway. Filipino travelers are also urged to avoid hospitals and clinics unless they have medical emergency. Those with health concerns are advised to stay in their homes or hotels and call their physicians to avoid possible exposure.

For monitoring purposes, all Filipinos and Filipino-Americans living in Southern California, Southern Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas are requested to report to the Philippine Consulate General in Los Angeles suspected cases of swine flu among the Filipino community through its emergency hotline no. (213) 268-9990 or email at losangelespcg@earthlink.net.

As an additional precaution, the Department of Health will be distributing a Health Alert Notice (HAN) to all arriving travelers from the United States and Mexico. Travelers will also be required to fill out a Health Declaration Checklist at major ports of entry in the Philippines to screen for potential signs and symptoms of exposure to the virus. ###end