

World Environmental Health Day highlights environmental protection to safeguard public health from pandemic

Celebrated every year on September 26, World Environmental Health Day (WEHD), underscores the relevance and importance of environmental health to prevent the spread of pandemic diseases or of today's most pressing issue on COVID-19 transmission.

As the whole world struggles from the COVID-19 outbreak causing loss of millions of lives and economic hardship in the lives of people globally, organizations, regional groups, academic associates and national governments set up initiatives and policies to address this pandemic.

The Environmental Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (EMB-DENR) and Department of Health (DOH), at the helm in commemorating this year's WEHD, draw attention in maintaining good environmental health and proper safety and sanitation measures as a key to fighting COVID-19 and in preventing future pandemics.

EMB Director William P. Cuñado said, "it is our responsibility to raise awareness on the interrelation of environmental health and diseases especially now that we are faced with the COVID-19 outbreak. Poor health is often a result of poor environment, and by improving the conditions in which we live and work, it will surely make a huge difference in our public health system.

"Poor environmental health endangers people whose health status is already at risk", Cuñado added.

According to reports, the Philippines still has the most number of COVID-19 cases in Southeast Asia. To date, the virus has killed more than 831,000 people of the over 24 million infected since the disease first surfaced in China late last year.

"We must heighten our awareness campaign and enjoin all sectors of society and communities to safeguard environmental health to fight the likelihood of exposure to diseases", Cuñado said.

The national observance of WEHD with the theme "Sa Panahon ng Pandemya, Malusog na Kapaligiran ang BIDA", the two agencies jointly organized a Webinar to highlight the country's programs on water, sanitation and health. It will also discuss waste management practices in communities, homes, schools, marketplaces, prisons and health care facilities.

The webinar will also be presenting future initiatives on environmental health and management, possible collaboration and cooperation among agencies and stakeholders and sharing of best practices on addressing COVID-19.

The yearly observance of WEHD is pursuant to Presidential Proclamation 595 signed in 2018 by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte.

###