

Republic of the Philippines  
Department of Health  
**OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

22 October 2020

**MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR**

No. 2020 - 0049

**TO :** ALL UNDERSECRETARIES AND ASSISTANT SECRETARIES; ALL DIRECTORS OF BUREAUS, SERVICES AND CENTERS FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT; MINISTER OF HEALTH – BANGSOMORO AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO; EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS OF SPECIALTY HOSPITALS AND OTHER HOSPITAL FACILITIES; CHIEFS OF MEDICAL CENTERS, HOSPITALS, SANITARIA AND INSTITUTES; REGIONAL BLOOD PROGRAM COORDINATORS, HEADS OF BLOOD SERVICE FACILITIES AND ALL OTHERS CONCERNED


**SUBJECT :** Department of Health - Department of the Interior and Local Government (DOH-DILG) Joint Memorandum Circular No. 2020-02 entitled “Guidelines on the Advocacy, Recruitment and Community Mobilization for the Local Voluntary Blood and Convalescent Plasma Donation Program”

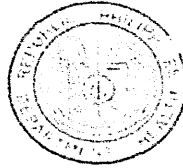
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Attached for your information and guidance is a copy of the DOH-DILG Joint Memorandum Circular No. 2020-02 dated August 6, 2020 entitled “Guidelines on the Advocacy, Recruitment and Community Mobilization for the Local Voluntary Blood and Convalescent Plasma Donation Program”.

Dissemination of the information to all concerned is requested.

By Authority of the Secretary of Health:

  
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Undersecretary of Health  
Public Health Services Team



DILG

Republic of the Philippines  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

6 August 2020

JOINT MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR  
No. 2020 - 02

SUBJECT : Guidelines on the Advocacy, Recruitment and Community Mobilization for the Local Voluntary Blood and Convalescent Plasma Donation Program

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## I. BACKGROUND

In response to the increasing number of COVID-19 cases worldwide, while waiting for a definitive drug or vaccine to treat or prevent the disease, an investigational treatment is being explored with the use of Convalescent Plasma (CP) from recovered COVID-19 patients.

With the implementation of the Convalescent Plasma (CP) Donation Program pursuant to DOH Department Memorandum (DM) No. 2020-0216 "Collection of Convalescent Plasma (CP) and Networking for Therapeutic Strategy for COVID-19", the Philippine Blood Center (PBC) together with National Voluntary Blood Services Program (NVBSP), will spearhead the CP Donation Program. This is consistent with one of the provisions of the "Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations of the National Blood Services Act of 1994 (RA 7719)" which is the promotion and encouragement of voluntary blood donation mobilizing all sectors to participate in the voluntary and non-profit collection of blood.

To strengthen local implementation, collaboration with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) is vital to enjoin the participation of Local Government Units (LGUs) in the promotion, recruitment and collection of safe and adequate blood and CP for COVID-19 patients as well as other patients needing blood/blood products for transfusion, and allocation of appropriate funds for the Local Blood Donation Program pursuant to DOH AO No. 2010-0002 and DOH AO 2006-0017.

## II. OBJECTIVE

To guide Local Government Units and Local Blood Councils in incorporating the Convalescent Plasma Donation Program with the Local Voluntary Blood Donation Program on activities pertaining to advocacy, recruitment, and community mobilization

### III. SCOPE

This Order shall apply to all Local Government Units (LGUs), Local Chief Executives, Local Health Offices, Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and its field offices, Department of Health and the Centers for Health Development, Ministries of Local Government and Health of Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), and other concerned entities.

### IV. DEFINITION OF TERMS

- A. **Blood Center (BC)** - a non-hospital based blood service facility licensed by the DOH-Health Facilities Services and Regulatory Bureau (HFSRB), which detailed service capabilities are enumerated in AO No. 2008-0008. The Blood Centers are classified into Regional, Sub-national and National by the National Council for Blood Services (NCBS);
- B. **Blood Service Facility (BSF)** - a unit, agency or institution providing blood products. The types of BSF, are the following Blood Center, Hospital Blood Bank, Blood Station, Blood Collection Unit;
- C. **Blood Services Network (BSN)** - an informal organization established to provide for the blood needs of a specific geographical areas or catchment population. It is composed of a designated blood center, hospital blood banks, blood collection units, blood stations and end-user hospitals/non-hospital health facilities. The objectives of the Blood Services Network are the efficient distribution of voluntarily donated blood by the blood center to different Blood Service Facilities, hospitals and other end users to make blood available to all patients, maximize utilization of available blood and avoid wastage;
- D. **Convalescent Plasma (CP)** - is plasma taken from a person who has recovered from SARS-CoV-2 infection and contains neutralizing antibodies against the said infection. Giving convalescent plasma collected from individuals who have recovered from COVID-19 to infected patients is a form of passive antibody therapy, which could offer a possible therapeutic strategy;
- E. **Hospital Blood Bank (HBB)** - a blood service facility in a hospital, duly licensed by the DOH-Center for Health Development (CHD) whose service capabilities are enumerated in AO No. 2008-0008;
- F. **Local Blood Council** - a non-profit, non-governmental, multi-sectoral group whose members come from government and private sector in the local community committed to support the blood program. Its objective is to plan and implement a local blood donation program in accordance to DOH policies and guidelines on Local Blood Councils;

### V. GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. The LGUs are enjoined in the existing Voluntary Blood Donation Program including the Convalescent Plasma donation program through:
  - a. Promotion of the Voluntary Blood Donation Program including the CP Donation Program;
  - b. Assistance in donor advocacy, recruitment, retention and donor care programs
  - c. Referral of Voluntary Blood Donors and Voluntary CP Donors to BSF and Convalescent Plasma Facilities Network;

- d. Updating/establishment of Blood Donor Registry and Registration of Convalescent Plasma Volunteer Donors; and
- e. Reiteration of the implementation of the DOH AO 2010-0002.

## **VI. SPECIFIC GUIDELINES**

### **A. Advocacy, Recruitment and Community Mobilization through Existing Voluntary Blood Donation Program or Established of Local Blood Council**

1. The Regional Blood Program Coordinators (through their Development Management Officer Blood Program Point Person) shall:
  - a. Oversee and facilitate the implementation of advocacy, promotion, recruitment of Voluntary Blood and CP Donation Program and provide orientation and technical assistance at the local level.
  - b. Coordinate and monitor the advocacy and recruitment activities of the Local Voluntary Blood Donation and CP Donation Program at the local level in collaboration with Lead Blood Service Facilities and NVBSP.
2. All LGU Blood Coordinators shall participate in the advocacy, recruitment, retention, and care of volunteer blood and CP donors in coordination with the Regional Blood Program Coordinators.
3. In the implementation of Voluntary Blood and Convalescent Plasma Donation in the community, the existing Local Blood Program Coordinator, the Local Blood Council, or whichever entity is mandated to perform the following, shall:
  - a. Plan and implement public education, advocacy and donor recruitment activities/strategies to sustain Voluntary Blood Donation Program and promote the CP Donation Program;
  - b. Conduct an organized and sustained public information campaign to promote Voluntary Blood and Convalescent Plasma Donation through:
    - i. Flyers, brochures
    - ii. Posters, billboards
    - iii. News articles, features, press releases
    - iv. Radio, TV, talk shows
    - v. Virtual media platforms
  - c. Assist in the recruitment, retention and care of conventional, apheresis and CP volunteer blood donors through:
    - i. Community meetings and seminars (virtual during COVID-19 pandemic)
    - ii. Volunteer blood donor and volunteer CP donor club membership
    - iii. Other forms of communication

### **B. Donor Recruitment in the Community for Voluntary Blood Donation and Convalescent Plasma Donation**

1. A Local Blood Program Coordinator, shall be designated by the Local Health Officer ✓

2. COVID-19 recovered patients shall be encouraged to become voluntary CP donors. They shall decide which authorized BSF will collect their CP.
3. Only BC and existing HBB with additional functions licensed by the DOH-Health Facilities Services and Regulatory Bureau (HFSRB) are allowed to collect CP.
4. Donation of COVID-19 convalescent plasma shall be collected from Voluntary Non-Remunerated Blood Donors only. It shall strictly comply with the World Health Organization's (WHO) definition of Voluntary Non-Remunerated Blood Donation (VNRBD): "*A person who donates blood (and plasma or cellular components) of his/her own free will and receives no payment for it, either in the form of cash, or in kind which could be considered a substitute for money*", as stated in the DC No. 2018-0324.
5. The volunteer donor of COVID-19 convalescent plasma must fulfill the criteria stated in DM 2020-0216 to be eligible for CP Donation.
6. Donor screening procedure for the COVID-19 recovered patients shall follow the usual procedure with informed consent, risk assessment using the standard DOH Donor History Questionnaire and the donor exclusion based on the DOH-NVBSP Manual of Blood Donor Selection.
7. In referring COVID-19 recovered patients for CP donation, the basis for selecting the authorized CP BSF shall be the proximity of donor's residence or place of work to the collecting facility.
8. The community-based facility who will be referring voluntary CP donors shall coordinate with the authorized CP Collecting BSF to provide conveyance to donors when public transport is not available. CP volunteer donors may be reimbursed of their transport expenses consistent with the WHO definition of VNRBD, subject to local guidelines such as budget ordinance, work and financial plan, community quarantine or inter-zonal travel rules, and in accordance with the accounting and auditing rules.
9. To ensure efficiency and equitable access to the supply of safe CP, the distribution of CP shall be encapsulated in the CP BSN. The Philippine Blood Center (PBC) is the Lead Convalescent Plasma BSF with functions as defined in DM 2020-0216.
10. The community-based facility shall maintain a registry of COVID-19 CP Voluntary Donors that they have referred to authorized BSFs. The registry shall be accessible to NVBSP, PBC, CHDs and other designated Lead Blood Service Facility authorized personnel, consistent with and in compliance to the Data Privacy Act (RA 10173).
11. The Local Blood Program Coordinator shall coordinate with the Regional Blood Program Coordinator in the implementation of CP donation in the community and shall submit and maintain a registry of voluntary CP donors which shall be submitted to the NVBSP-Philippine Blood Center.
12. There shall be an effective donor retention and care to maintain repeat voluntary blood and CP donors.
13. A COVID-19 CP voluntary donor shall be encouraged to become a repeat donor. CP may be collected up to twice a month through apheresis.

### C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **Provincial Convalescent Plasma /Blood Program Coordinator** (as designated by Local Government Health Officer or "by the Local Blood Council") shall;

- a. Support or advocate the passage of a local ordinance adopting the "Convalescent Plasma and Voluntary Blood Donation Program" as one of its flagship projects.
- b. Submit a project proposal for budgetary allocation as per DILG Memorandum Circular No. 96-66 dated 24 April 1996 – integrating the Voluntary Blood Donation Services Program, including CP Donation Program into the local financial work plan and budget as an added function of the local health board.
- c. Call for a meeting to be represented by Provincial Governor, PHO, MHO's, Municipal Mayors, DOH Rep. (RHD) Lead Blood Service Facility, Certified CP Collecting Facility and other concern in the formulation of a strategic plan for Provincial/Municipal CP/Voluntary Blood Services Program in line with the plans of the NVBSP and PBC.
- d. Coordinate with the Regional Blood Program Coordinator in identifying a satellite CP BSF for the access of convalescent plasma units according to zones/catchment area.
- e. Facilitate the training of donor recruiters from Provincial and Municipal Blood Program Coordinators.
- f. Establish linkages with Government Offices, Non-Government Organizations, Private Organizations and other related sectors for intensive information campaigns about CP and Voluntary Blood Donation Program.
- g. Provide technical assistance/support.
- h. Collation of report, monitoring and evaluation of all municipalities' Convalescent Plasma and voluntary blood donation program activities to be submitted to the Regional Blood Program Coordinator.
- i. Monitor compliance of LGUs to issuances related to functionality of Local Blood Council (e.g. DILG Memorandum Circular No. 96-66 dated 24 April 1996- Integrating the Voluntary Blood Donation Services and Program into the Local Financial Work Plan and Budget as an added function of the Local Health Board, DOH AO No. 2010-0002, etc.)

**2. City or Municipality CP/Blood Program Coordinator (as designated by the City/Municipal Health Officer) shall:**

- a. Support or advocate the passage of a local ordinance adopting the promotion of CP and Voluntary Blood Donation Program in the community.
- b. Submit a project proposal for allocation of counterpart budget to the office of the City Mayor.
- c. Formulate a strategic plan and work and financial plan, where applicable, for the City CP Program and integrate existing Voluntary Blood Donation Program.
- d. Facilitate the training on donor recruitment, retention and care.
- e. Conduct meetings, seminars, and orientations related to CP Voluntary Donation Program and public education – (i.e. IEC materials such as radio and television plugs).
- f. Coordinate with Regional Blood Program Coordinator for the collation of reports and monitoring and evaluation of all CP and voluntary blood donation activities in zonal areas under his/her jurisdiction.
- g. Monitoring compliance of LGUs on the submission of reports and monitoring and evaluation of all CP and voluntary blood donation activities.

**3. Regional, Provincial/City/Municipal Local government operations officer (LGOO) shall:**

1. Assist the monitoring of compliance after the Local Blood Program Coordinator has already exhausted acceptable means to follow-up the submission of reports of CP and voluntary blood donation activities. ✓

## VII. REPEALING CLAUSE


All other issuances that are inconsistent with any provisions of this Joint Memorandum Circular are hereby amended, modified, or repealed accordingly.

## II. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE

In the event that any provision or part of this Joint Memorandum Circular is declared unauthorized or rendered invalid by any court of law, those provisions not affected by such declaration shall remain valid and in effect.

## III. EFFECTIVITY

This Joint Memorandum Circular shall take effect immediately.

  
FRANCISCO T. DUQUE III, MD, MSc  
Secretary of Health

  
EDUARDO M. AÑO  
Secretary of Interior and Local Government

