

# Measles outbreak in Philippines passes 8,000 cases

The Department of Health released an infomercial Monday starring boxer Manny Pacquiao urging the public to vaccinate themselves and their children.



Philippine Red Cross health workers administer a measles vaccine to a boy during a nationwide response program to immunization people at a slum area in Manila, Philippines. Photo by Francis R. Malasig/EPA-EFE

Feb. 18 (UPI) — More than 8,000 people have been infected with measles this year in the Philippines, according to the Department of Health.

Less than a week after the Southeast Asian country declared a measles outbreak in the capital of Manila and other parts of the nation, the Department of Health has counted 8,443 measles cases between Jan. 1 and 9 a.m. Feb. 16, Rappler reported.

The number of cases is a 253 percent increase from the same period last year.

A total 136 people have died from the disease in that same time period, 40 percent of whom were under the age of four, Philstar Global reported.

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The number of dead is a 491 percent increase from the 23 people who died during the same period last year, the Department of Health said.

To combat the rising number of measles cases, the Department of Health has enlisted one of its most famous citizens Sen. Manny Pacquiao to convince people to vaccinate their children.

In a new infomercial titled "Knock out measles," released Monday, the award-winning boxer encourages the public to be vigilant against the disease.

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"In boxing, I have your back. But in the fight against measles, we have to be together," he says in the video that also features health secretary Francisco Duque.

The secretary also informs the viewer that measles vaccines are available nationwide at government health centers and that it is the best way to combat the disease, Philstar Global reported.

The Department of Health has said one of the main causes for the outbreak is "vaccine hesitancy."

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The lack of trust in the government's immunization program was brought on by controversy over a dengue vaccine.

In 2017, news of potential side effects to the dengue vaccine resulted in public outrage and ever since the rate of immunization has dropped.

The other reason for the drop was a lack of time to make it to a medical center, the Department of Health said, citing a World Health Organization report.

"I appeal to the public to rebuild your trust and confidence in vaccines that were long proven to be effective, and I am quite sure that all of us sometime in our lives have been recipients of these vaccines, which had protected us from various diseases," health secretary Francisco Duque said in a statement earlier February.

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Source: <https://www.upi.com/Measles-outbreak-in-Philippines-passes-8000-cases/8251550546872/>

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