

PRESS RELEASE
20 AUGUST 2026

CUA UNDERSCORES IMPORTANCE OF DIALOGUE IN VACCINATION

Amid an alarming increase of anti-vaccine sentiment in the country, the president of the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines called on his fellow local leaders to “actively engage our communities” to combat the threat of misinformation being circulated especially online.

“We need to actively engage our communities and convince them of the benefits of immunization, and that there are real dangers to remaining unvaccinated that are far worse than those shared by spreaders of misinformation,” Quirino governor Dax Cua said.

“Otherwise, we risk derailing our immunization program. Tandaan po natin na ang compliance sa immunization ay hindi lang para sa ibinabanderang datos—ang layunin ng pagbabakuna ay ang pagprotekta sa mga sektor ng lipunan na madaling kapitan ng mga sakit. We want to vaccinate more to achieve herd immunity and prevent diseases from easily spreading,” he added.

Cua’s comment comes after various local government units have reported pushback against the government’s ongoing measles-rubella (MR) Supplemental Immunization Activity, which runs until August 28. The campaign aims to immunize children from age six to 59 months who are at risk of infection.

In Bohol province, for example, as of August 13 only 7,400 of the province’s estimated 100,000 children had received the MR vaccine, with health officials warning that misinformation and misconceptions circulating on social media have undermined vaccination efforts.

In Cebu City, meanwhile, the city government registered 486 refusals and reached only 9,000 of its 90,000 target children for vaccination as of August 15.

Cua emphasized the need for local governments to “break the wall of mistrust” arising from the perpetration of misinformation among the people.

“We have to regain the trust and confidence of our people in vaccines. We can do this not through scolding or public shaming, but rather through communication that is anchored on sustained, respectful, and evidence-based dialogue,” the governor added.

Cua warned that low vaccination numbers could lead to another rise in measles cases this year.

The Department of Health had earlier reported that the 5,123 MR cases in 2025 was 32-percent higher than the 3,880 cases logged in 2024. There has also been a high spike in MR cases during the first quarter of 2026, with the 1,627 reported cases from January 4 to March 21 45 percent higher than the 1,121 cases during the same period a year ago.

“We have to do everything we can to prevent another measles outbreak due to low vaccination numbers. We cannot have another repeat of 2019 where tens of thousands of children are endangered because of measles and rubella,” Cua said.

In 2019, the country experienced a measles outbreak, with a total of 47,871 cases of measles, including 632 deaths, being recorded.

----- o0o -----

Ref:

Joshua F. Gonzales

ULAP Information and Communication Technology Officer

Email: ulapnatsec@gmail.com

Mobile: (+63)966 069 5076

ULAP is the umbrella organization of all leagues of local government units and local government officials in country, serving as the focal representative and mouthpiece of the subnational government in all policy and program platforms to amplify our unified advocacy towards the strengthening of LGUs into able partners in nation-building.

Learn more at www.ulap.net.ph.