

**Department of Social Welfare and Development  
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION**

**Regional Memorandum Order No. 002  
Series of 2021**

**SUBJECT: Protocol for the Conduct of Research Studies in DSWD FO- NCR, Centers  
and Residential Care Facilities under the New Normal Situations**

**I. RATIONALE:**

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) including the Central Office, Field Offices and its Centers and Residential Care Facilities, is a rich source of information and good facility to learn about various social protection efforts and approaches in the Philippines. Given the Department's thrust to provide leadership in this field and its mandate to assist, Local Government Units (LGUs), Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), other National Government Agencies (NGAs) and Civil Society Groups, it becomes our responsibility to share experiences and expertise to those who are interested to conduct research studies and gain better understanding of issues and concerns and best practices along social protection.<sup>1</sup>

In the context of Field Office- NCR, there has been a significant increase on the number of requests to conduct research studies from partner academes and stakeholders both in local and foreign. In 2014-2018, there were a total of 912 research requests received with an average increase of 62.62% from the previous years. Further, a total of 115 manuscripts of completed research conducted from 2014- 2018 were submitted to the Region in compliance to the AO 19 series 2011 or the Department's Research Protocol. These manuscripts were reviewed; findings and recommendations were consolidated and disseminated to the concerned D/C/RCF/S/Us of the Region which can be used as basis for crafting of policies/guidelines, enhancement of program and services towards service excellence.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) remains faithful to its mandate to provide social welfare and protection programs and services to the poor, vulnerable groups such as children, elderly, women and person with disabilities, and disadvantaged even in times of National State of Emergency. In order not to disrupt its operation, the Department may resort to alternative means in providing basic and vital services to indigent Filipinos and partner stakeholders including provision of research permits, conduct of data gathering activities and sharing of SWD Data and information.<sup>2</sup>

For this year the world faced an unanticipated threat which started last quarter of 2019 where a mysterious illness from Wuhan, China has killed more than 814,000 people with infections surpassing 50,111,147million worldwide<sup>3</sup>. Last March, 2020 Department of Health confirmed the first reported local transmission in the Philippines where the patient has no any travel history outside the Philippines. This incident, made the government decided to set COVID-19 Alert System to Code Red sublevel 2 in Metro Manila and other areas with reported high incidence of local transmission. Per data

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<sup>1</sup> DSWD – AO 19 s. 2011

<sup>2</sup> DSWD MC 08 2020

<sup>3</sup> Google/daily/update/cases

from DOH there are 396,000 confirmed cases as of November 8, 2020 and 362,000 total recoveries with an average of 1000- 2000 newly reported cases per day.

While still battling with SARS-CoV-2 and no available vaccine or cure that will guaranteed us that we are safe from the eminent threat of acquiring this virus, all our transactions will be in new normal phase where stringent protocol must follow to ensure that spread of this virus will be prevented. Thus, this memorandum is deemed necessary to provide guidance in order to protect the staff as well as researchers particularly clients under the custody of Centers and Residential Care Facilities in executing their research related activities in all Division/ Center/Residential Care Facilities/ Sections/Units ( D/C/RCF/S/U) of DSWD FO- NCR.

## II. LEGAL BASES:

### **National Issuances**

**Republic Act No. 11469** Also known as “**Bayanihan to Heal as one Act of 2020** - An act declaring the existence of national emergency arising from the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) situation and a national policy in connection therewith, and **authorizing** the president of the republic of the Philippines for a limited period and subject to restrictions, to exercise powers necessary and proper to carry out the declared national policy and for other purposes.”.

**Department of Health Administrative Order No. 2020- 0015-** This order aims to provide public health standard to mitigate threat of COVID- 19. It shall serve as a basis in the decision- making process and development of more specific sectoral policies for COVID -19 Responses.

**Department of Health Circular No. 2020-0130- No.2** National Government Agencies, Local Chief Executives, school administrators, and religious leaders are strongly encouraged to **regulate gatherings and practice social distancing.**

**Republic Act of 10173- Data Privacy Act of 2020- Sec.** Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the State to protect the fundamental human right of privacy, of communication while ensuring free flow of information to promote innovation and growth. The State recognizes the vital role of information and communications technology in nation-building and its inherent obligation to ensure that personal information in information and communications systems in the government and in the private sector are secured and protected.

### **DSWD Issuances**

#### **Safety and Precautionary**

**Memorandum from the Program Management Bureau (PMB) on April 20, 2020-** Guidance on the Protection, Prevention and Safety of Residents and Personnel at the DSWD Residential Care Facilities Re: COVID-19.

**Advisory No. 1 Series of 2020-** Guidelines for Prevention, Control and Mitigating of the Spread of the Coronavirus Disease- 19 (COVID- 19) in the DSWD Central Office, Field Offices, Other Facilities, Attached and Supervised Agencies.- states that, to safeguard its workforce, internal, and external stakeholders, and to prevent the spread of the disease, this issuance shall cover operationalization of the department's

programs and services while the country is under State of Public Health Emergency Code Red Sub Level 2.

**Administrative Order No. 3 Series of 2020-** Department Social Welfare and Development ( DSWD) Covid- 19 Response and Recovery Plan for ( 2020-2022).

**Regional Memorandum Order No. 1 series of 2020- Regional Guidelines for Adaptation of Alternative Work-** Adaptation of Alternative Work Arrangements to ensure stringent protocol in light of COVID- 19.

**Memorandum Circular No. 10 Series of 2019-** Protocol for the Conduct of Research Studies in DSWD Offices, Centers and Institutions, Amending Administrative Order No. 19, s. 2011 including request of SWD Data/ Information.

### III. DEFINITION OF TERMS:

1. **COVID-19<sup>4</sup>** - refers to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 which is caused by the virus known as the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).
2. **COMMUNITY QUARANTINE<sup>5</sup>** - refers to the restriction of movement within, into, or out of the area of quarantine of individuals, large groups of people, or communities, designed to reduce the likelihood of transmission of an infectious disease among persons in and to persons outside the affected area.
3. **ENHANCED COMMUNITY QUARANTINE<sup>6</sup>** - refers to the implementation of temporary measures imposing stringent limitations on movement and transportation of people, strict regulation of operating industries, provision of food and essential services, and heightened presence of uniformed personnel to enforce community quarantine protocols.
4. **EXTERNAL RESEARCHERS<sup>7</sup>**- refers to those individuals, groups or organizations who intended to conduct research in DSWD. It includes DSWD personnel conducting research for the purpose of pursuing higher academic education.
5. **GENERAL COMMUNITY QUARANTINE<sup>8</sup>** - refers to the implementation of temporary measures limiting movement and transportation, regulation of operating industries, and presence of uniformed personnel to enforce community quarantine protocols.
6. **INTERNAL RESEARCHES<sup>9</sup>**- refers to all agency initiated / funded researches.
7. **NEW NORMAL<sup>10</sup>**- refers to the emerging behaviors, situations, and minimum public health standards that will be institutionalized in common or routine practices and remain even after the pandemic while the disease is not totally eradicated through means such as widespread immunization. These include actions that will become second nature to the general public as well as policies such as bans on large gatherings that will continue to remain in force.

<sup>4</sup> Omnibus Guidelines on the Implementation of Community Quarantine in the Philippines

<sup>5</sup> IATF No 40 series of 2020

<sup>6</sup> Omnibus Guidelines on the Implementation of Community Quarantine in the Philippines

<sup>7</sup> DSWD MC 10 s 2019

<sup>8</sup> Omnibus Guidelines on the Implementation of Community Quarantine in the Philippines

<sup>9</sup> DSWD MC 10 series of 2020

<sup>10</sup> IATF Omnibus Guidelines for the Implementation of Community Quarantine in the Philippines

8. **VULNERABLE GROUPS<sup>11</sup>** - refers to socially disadvantaged groups that are most susceptible to suffer directly from disasters and health events. These include senior citizens, immunocompromised individuals, women, and children, persons deprived with liberty (PDL), persons with disabilities (PWDs), and members of indigenous people (IPs), internally displaced persons (IDPs), and indigenous cultural communities (ICCs), among others.

#### **IV. OBJECTIVES**

This guideline shall provide protocol in conducting research related activities adapting new normal situation.

#### **V. SCOPE AND COVERAGE**

This guideline shall apply to all internal and external researchers such as students, academe other government agencies (national / local/ international), research institutions, independent researchers in all offices including C/RCFs of DSWD- FO NCR for both clients and staff.

#### **VI. GENERAL POLICIES / IMPLEMENTING PROCEDURE**

##### **1. Request for SWD Data / Information**

- 1.1 Researcher / Students shall still cover by the protocol per **MC 10 series of 2019** however to limit the face to face interaction it is encourage that coordination related to the said request and release of data/information shall be thru electronic mail provided by the researchers.

##### **2. Conduct of Research Studies in DSWD- NCR, Center and Residential Care Facilities**

- 2.1 All researches/rs shall still undergo protocol per MC 10 series of 2019 however the Region discouraged face to face interaction most especially involving clients who are included in the vulnerable sectors.
- 2.2 The Region shall allow conduct of research related activities provided that their methodology shall use of other means of data gathering which shall not require or limit physical contact, face to face interaction and mass gatherings such as but not limited to use of remote interview, provision online links, and accomplishment of questionnaire thru electronic mail, etc.
- 2.3 Research participants shall be limited only to staff and key informants of DSWD- NCR including its Centers and Residential Care Facilities to facilitate the online methodology.

3. In case clients participation is relatively essential to the achievement of the objectives of the study and face to face interaction is deemed necessary protocol must be observed and provisions below shall strictly followed prior and during the conduct of Data Gathering in DSWD- FO NCR and its Center and Residential Care Facilities.

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<sup>11</sup> DOH Administrative Order 2020-0015

- 3.1 Researchers shall present medical certificate indicating negative result SWAB Test with validity date and indicating that the bearer is fit to conduct such activities;
  - 3.2 Researchers shall provide their own personal protective equipment (facemask, face shield, disinfecting solution/ alcohol) during the conduct of data gathering.
  - 3.3 Researchers shall strictly follow internal guidelines of D/C/RCFs to contain the potential spread of COVID-19 infection.
  - 3.4 Clients must be accompanied by the assigned staff of the C/RCFs to ensure that safety protocol is being observed throughout the data gathering activities. Private room where the conduct of data gathering shall be provided by the C/RCFs where necessary health protocols can be observed.
  - 3.5 In cases of program beneficiaries such as but not limited to Pantawid, SLP, Soc Pen, SFP, AICS wherein the clients are in the community the conduct of data gathering is subject to the approval of the Locality/ Barangay depending on their protocol in relation to the current pandemic. Researchers shall be the one to coordinate to the identified Local Government Units for the conduct of such activity.
4. Compliance to **Republic Act 10173 or also known as Data Privacy Act of 2012**, the researchers shall seek consent to all research participants discussing the procedure of data gathering activities and to discuss methodology and research instrument to be utilized such as video recorder, voice recorder; **Client's Protection Policy** of the Department must strictly follow. For minor respondent's Video/ Interview / Teleconferencing interview will not be allowed to protect their identity. For the list of the names of the program beneficiaries the current **Data Sharing protocol** shall still prevail.
  5. Researchers and the Schools/ Universities/Organizations where he or she belongs to shall signify their consent using the prescribed form (Annex A) and shall take full responsibility for compliance therewith including healthcare expenses of the researchers and participants.
  6. After the conduct of data gathering, the following are the protocols per MC 10, series of 2019 item no. 11,12 & 13.
    - 6.1 Researchers who are unable to conduct an exit conference due to scheduling/logistical/geographical constraints may submit a feedback report to the approving office in lieu of the said activity two (2) weeks after the completion of data gathering activities. Feedback report shall contain the data gathering activities, analysis of data initial findings and recommendations
    - 6.2 For foreign/international and undergraduate researchers, instead of an exit conference, they shall only be required to submit to the approving office the findings two (2) weeks after completion of the data gathering activities.
    - 6.3 Both electronic and hard copies of either preliminary or final research and evaluation report or Manuscript must be submitted to the approving office,

within one (1) month after the conclusion of the research instruments/tools and database shall likewise be submitted

7. **The Regional Director reserve the right to revoke permission to conduct the research study at any time and to waive any or all the provisions set in MC No. 010, series of 2019 and in this memorandum when need arises.**

## **VII. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT**

### **A. POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING SECTION**

1. Shall take the lead role in the monitoring of the implementation of these guidelines.
2. Review and assess the research requests
3. Facilitate the request per set timeline.
4. Coordinate with the concerned D/C/RCF/U/Ss.

### **B. ALL DIVISION/ CENTERS/RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES/ UNITS/ SECTIONS:**

1. Forward all research requests received by their office covered by these guidelines to PDPS.
2. Assist the PDPS in assessing the research request in terms of feasibility of its conduct in DSWD and ethical standards.
3. Assists / supervise the conduct of data gathering activities in their respective D/C/RCF/S/Us.
4. Submit feedback reports to the PDPS in relation to the implementation of these guidelines.

## **VIII. MONITORING**

D/C/RCF/U/Ss Research and Monitoring Evaluation focal person shall be the one to monitor the implementation of these guidelines in their respective D/C/RCF/S/Us and shall submit feedback report duly signed by their respective heads to Regional Director thru PDPS five working days after the conduct of the said data gathering.

Research and Development Team of PDPS shall monitor the regional implementation of these guidelines and shall consolidate the reports submitted by the D/C/RCF/U/Ss.

**IX. EFFECTIVITY**

This memorandum order shall take effect immediately until further notice from the IATF-EID and DSWD- Central Office. Let copies of this Regional Memorandum Order shall be given to all DSWD- NCR Division, Center/Residential Care Facilities, Units and Sections.

Issued this \_\_\_\_\_ January of 2021.

  
**VICENTE GREGORIO B. TOMAS**  
Regional Director 

Annex A: Terms and Conditions

Department of Social Welfare and Development  
National Capital Region

**Terms and Conditions**

Here are the terms and conditions to be agreed upon and complied by external researchers who intend to conduct studies / researchers in the DSWD FO- NCR, Centers and Residential Care Facilities.

1. Researchers shall present medical certificate indicating negative result SWAB Test with validity date and indicating that the bearer is fit to conduct such activities;
2. Researchers shall provide their own personal protective equipments (facemask, face shield, disinfecting solution/ alcohol, safety suite) during the conduct of data gathering.
3. Researchers shall strictly follow internal guidelines of D/C/RCFs in relation to measures pertaining to the New Normal situations.
4. In cases of program beneficiaries such as but not limited to Pantawid, SLP, Soc Pen, SFP, AICS wherein the clients are in the community the conduct of data gathering is subject to the approval of the Locality/ Barangay depending on their protocol in relation to the current pandemic. Researchers shall be the one to coordinate and seek clearance or permission to the identified Local Government Units for the conduct of such activity.
5. Compliance to **Republic Act 10173 or also known as Data Privacy Act of 2012**, the researchers shall seek consent to all research participants discussing the procedure of data gathering activities and to discuss methodology and research instrument to be utilized such as video recorder, voice recorder.; In the case of minor clients **Child Protection Policy** of the Department must strictly follow. Video/ Interview / Teleconferencing interview will not be allowed to protect their identity. For the list of the names of the program beneficiaries the current Data Sharing protocol of the Department shall still prevail.
6. DSWD FO NCR, Officials, Staff and Clients shall in no instance be held liable from any claims and liabilities from whatsoever personal, health and material harm or loss to researchers during the course of activity while within DSWD premises.
7. The Regional Director reserve the right to revoke permission to conduct the research study at any time and to waive any or all the provisions set in MC No. 010, series of 2019 and in this memorandum when need arises.

I/We hereby agree to all the aforesaid terms and conditions and guarantee compliance thereof, otherwise, the College/University/Agency/ Organization requiring the research project wherein I am/ We are connected shall be blacklisted.

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Printed Name and Signature of Researchers

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Printed Name & Signature of  
Researcher's Adviser/ Supervisor of  
Schools/ Universities/Institutions