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## STAY AT HOME FOR YOUR LOVED ONES THIS CHRISTMAS – DOH

*Press Release | 04 December 2020*

The Department of Health (DOH) today advised the public to stay at home with the family this Christmas season and instead use digital platforms such as video calls to keep in touch with relatives for a safer and healthier Christmas.

“We can still have a meaningful Christmas even if we stay at home and reconnect with our friends and families online,” Health Secretary Francisco T. Duque III said. He stressed that going out, visiting relatives and friends and attending family reunions are possible sources of infection as one cannot ascertain the exposure of and health status of other people.

Since the beginning of the pandemic and with mobility restrictions being imposed to mitigate the spread of the disease, people have been finding innovative ways of doing things to protect their health and safety. Webinars and online meetings have now become a business and leisure staple all over the world, together with food delivery and online shopping which have also become very common.

“Celebrating the holidays during this pandemic is no exception to maintaining our caution. In fact, with the holidays upon us, we have more reason to be careful and cautious as the usual practices during these times pose a much greater risk of contracting COVID-19. We all need to find safer ways to celebrate this season without compromising our health and the health of our loved ones,” Sec. Duque said.

The DOH has been constantly reminding the public on how to safely celebrate the holiday season. In its Department Circular No. 2020-0355 on COVID-19 risk-mitigation measures during the holidays issued last October, DOH recommends, among others, to limit the number of people in social gatherings, and avoid activities that may include traveling, especially to and from areas with different quarantine classifications. The government has also consistently warned the public from travelling to celebrate Christmas as such is considered non-essential and can be a reason for the spread of the virus.

“The virus is very much around and is still among us, and no one can be sure who the virus carrier is. Don’t bring home the virus. Please stay at home for a merrier and healthier Christmas. After all, a COVID-free holiday is one of the best gifts we can give to our loved ones,” Sec. Duque urged the public.