

Assessment of Baguio City, Philippines Policy Responses to Public Health Concerns during the early onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic

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OBJECTIVE

To assess the policy responses concerning public health and to document the best safety and public health practices of the City of Baguio during the COVID-19 pandemic.

METHOD

A qualitative study was done in the form of interviews (online and face to face interviews) with thirty establishments from the period of May to August 2020.

RESULTS

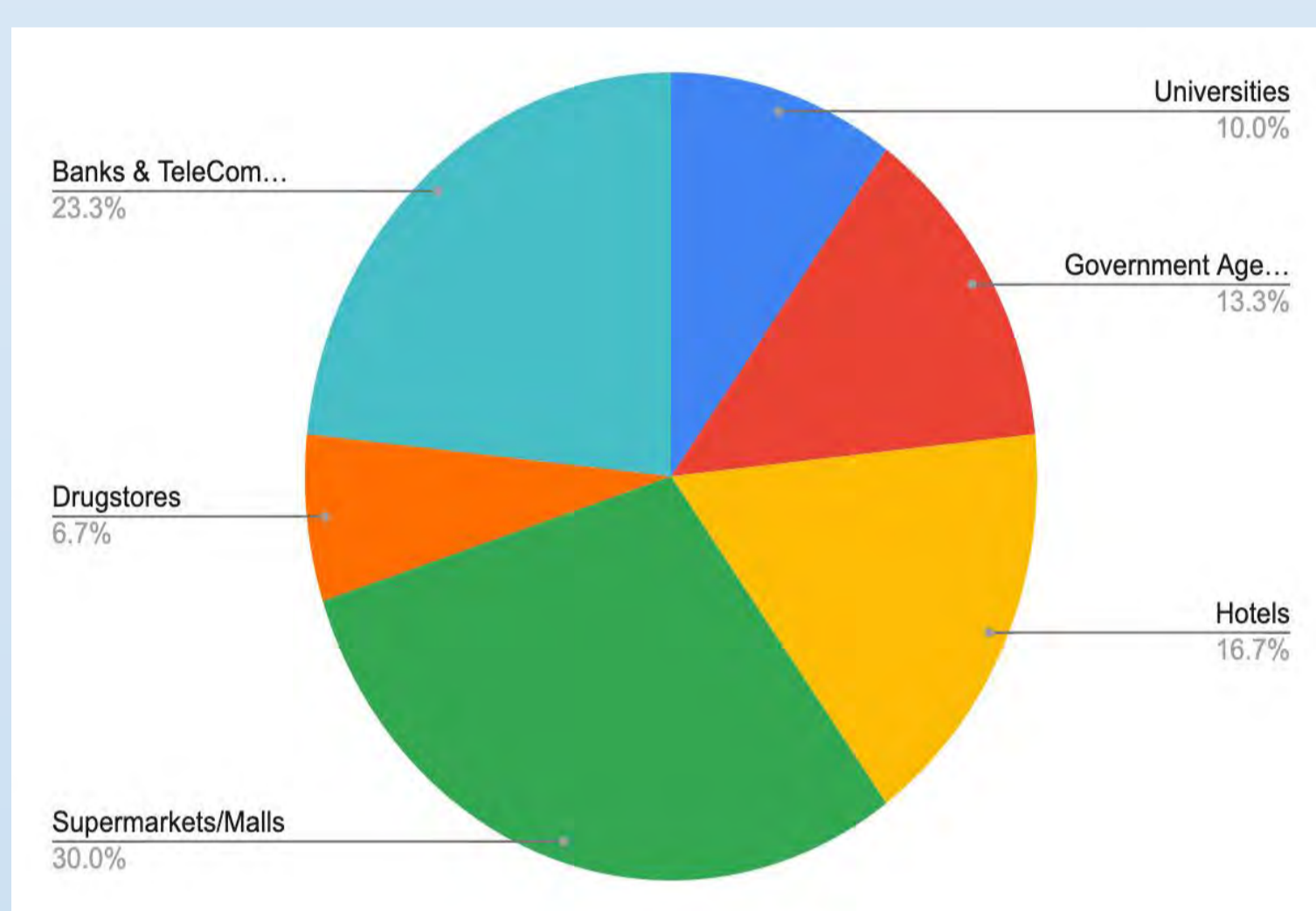


Figure 1: Pie chart illustrating the types and distribution of respondents to the research questionnaires.

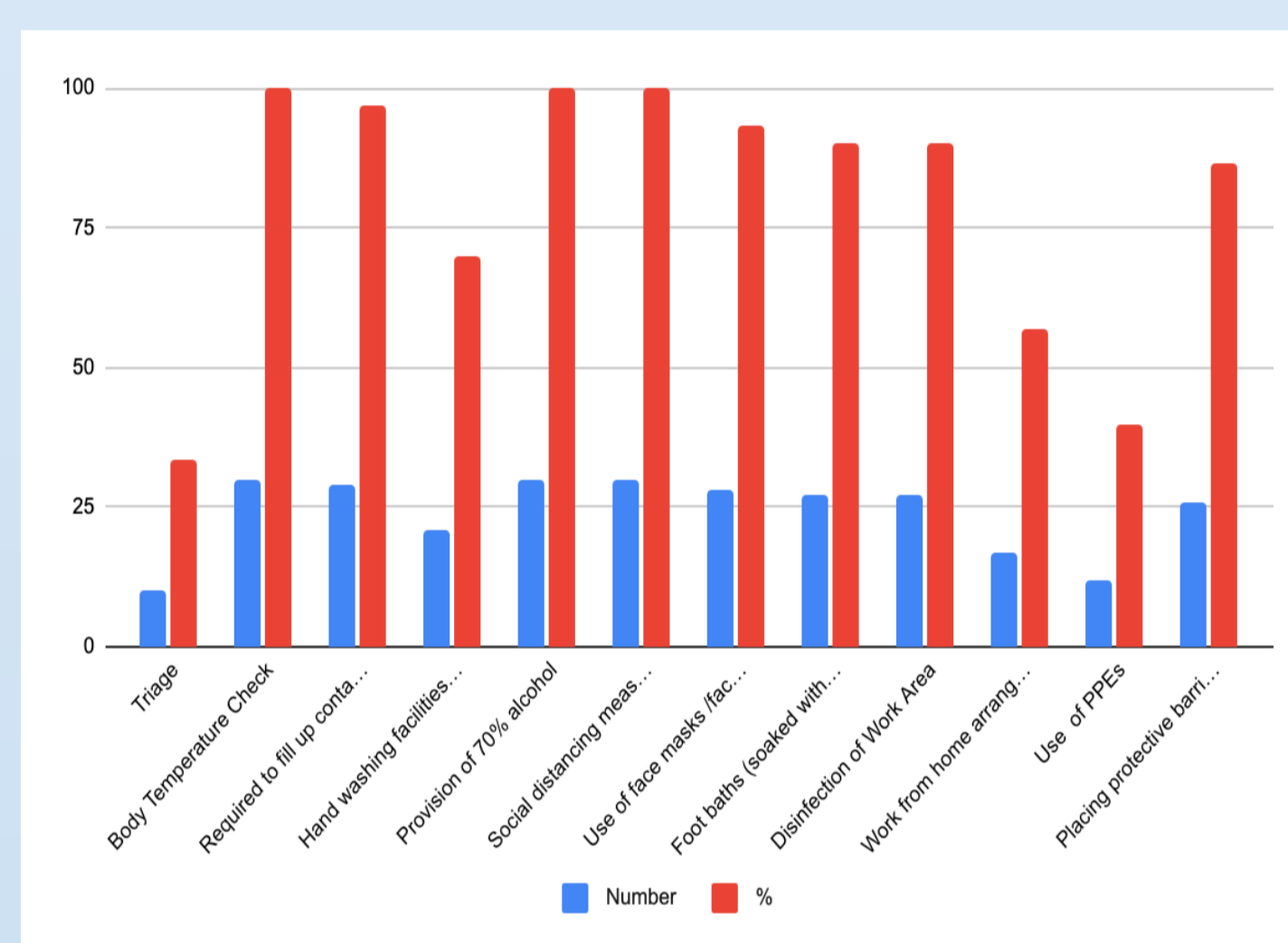


Figure 2: Safety protocols observed in the 30 establishments surveyed during the period of the study (September 2020 to April 2021)

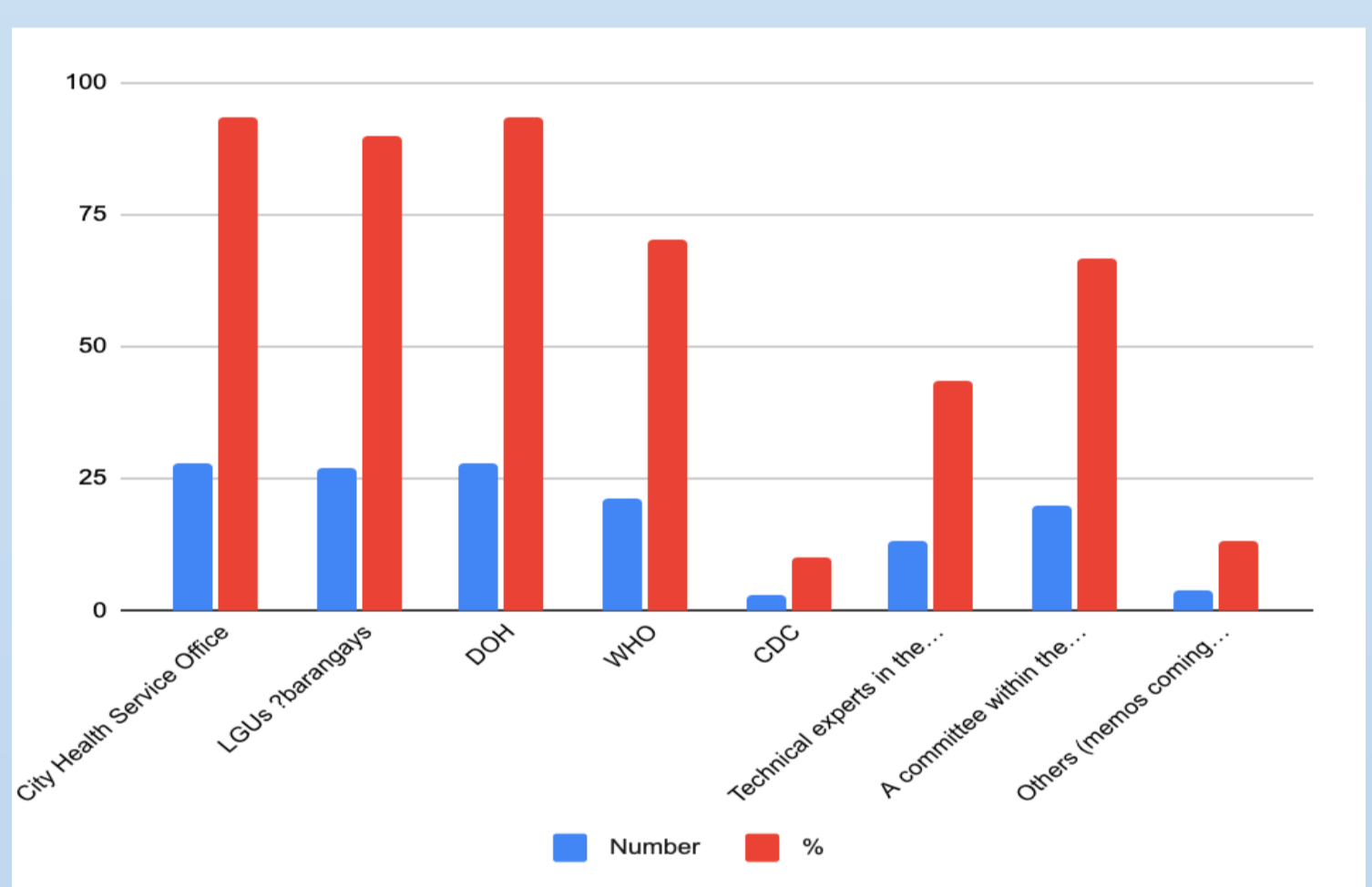


Figure 3: Sources of safety protocols observed in the establishments in Baguio City in response to COVID 19 pandemic.

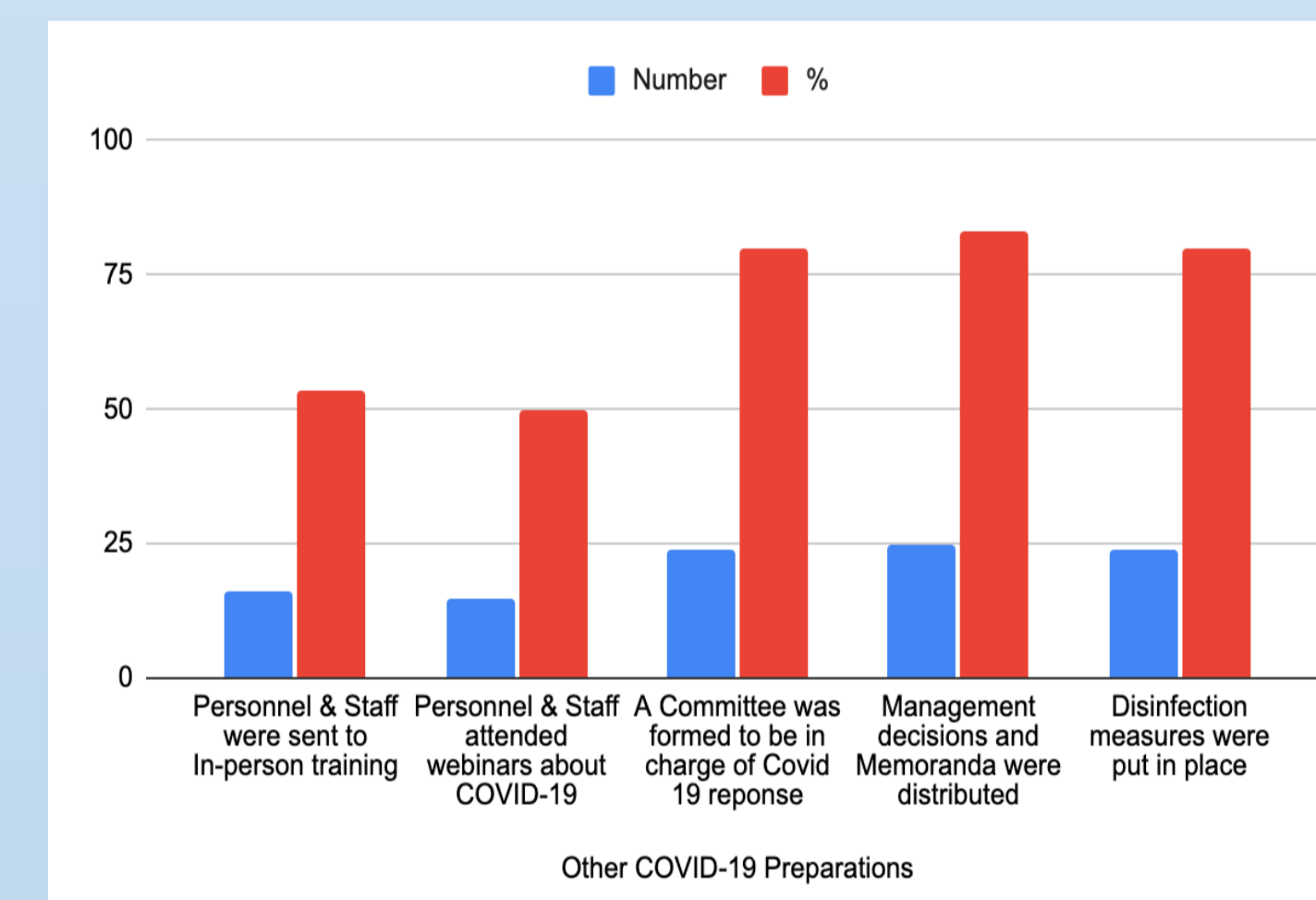


Figure 4: Other preparations observed in thirty (30) establishments in Baguio City in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

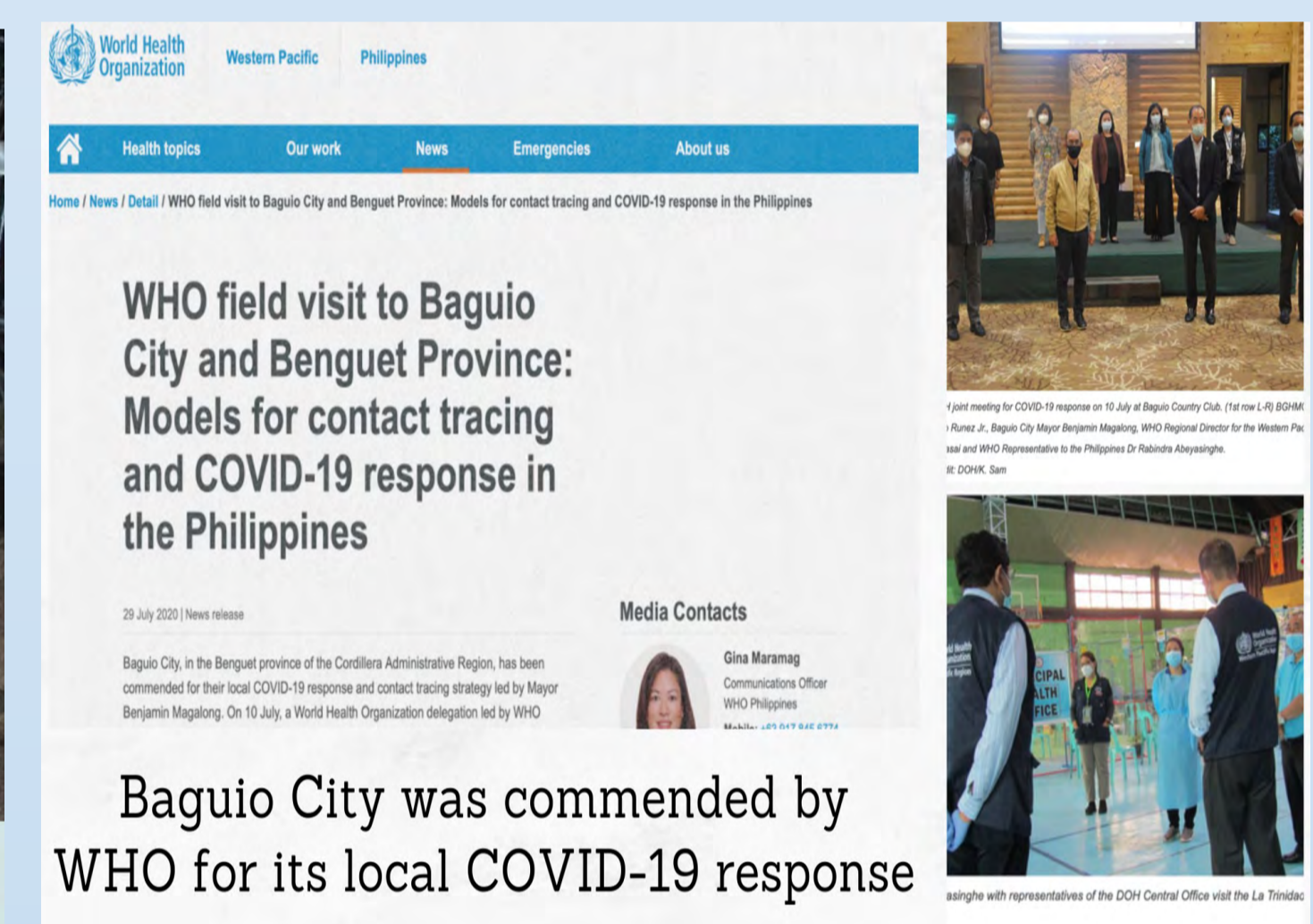
SUMMARY of RESULTS

- Sources of safety protocols used by thirty (30) establishments in the City of Baguio in response to COVID-19 were documented from March to September 2020.
- Disinfectants and disinfection procedures were also cross-checked against the Biosafety and Infection Control Guidelines as recommended by WHO and CDC.
- Heads of agencies and/or managers were in - charge of the COVID-19 response in their agencies. Some establishments have medical personnel composed of doctors and nurses.
- Best practices in the city were identified and documented.
- City of Baguio was one of the first cities in the Philippines to have the vaccination roll out, which started on March 2021.

BEST PRACTICES DOCUMENTED



MANDATORY USE OF FACEMASK



- April 2020: Isolation facilities were set up in the city; reiteration of wearing of face masks with face shields.
- May 2020: Use of ICT (Information Communication Technology) for better and more responsive emergency situations, which allowed to quickly tract the spread of the virus.
- July 2020: Setting up of Barangay Health Emergency Response Teams (BHERTS) in the city. Total of 387 BHERTS were tasked to carry out COVID-19 disease control measures at the grassroots.
- World Health Organization (WHO) commended the city and the province as models for contact tracing and its local COVID 19 response in the Philippines.**
- Limited entry to the city's malls and public market (a public market schedule was devised, and a general lock down during Sundays).
- August 2020: Transportation Schedule Plan advisory was released detailing schedule of buses, private cars, public utility vehicles (PUJs), motorcycles and bicycles.

CONCLUSIONS

- City of Baguio was able to conform to the international standards set by WHO and Center for Disease Control (CDC) and that the response of the city officials, law enforcers and city health officers were observed in a timely manner.
- City officials, law enforcers and city health officers did well in the COVID -19 response concerning public health.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The study recommends that city officials should regularly update policies and guidelines based on science-based policies to avoid confusion.
- The study recommends that a direct link to the WHO and CDC websites be placed in the city's Public Information Page and Website to regularly update the residents with the latest guidelines.

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