

DENR: 52,000 metric tons of hospital waste generated amid the pandemic

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(FILE PHOTO)

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, April 14) — As COVID-19 cases in the country continue to surge, so does the amount of medical waste, bringing to light another challenge in the Philippines' battle against the pandemic.

“There is a surge in hospital waste and solid waste,” Environment Undersecretary for Climate Change Analiza Teh told CNN Philippines’ *New Day* on Wednesday.

Around 52,000 metric tons of hospital waste have so far been generated amid the health crisis, Teh said. To put things in perspective, she likened that to over 2 million sacks of rice, with one sack containing 25 kilograms.

Of the total figure, only 14,000 metric tons were treated, she added.

The number was based on the special permit to transport, treat and dispose waste, she noted.

Proper disposal

Teh underscored the need to properly dispose medical wastes, which pose a threat to human health and the environment if improperly handled.

Hazardous waste should be brought to a facility where it will be treated before being sent to a disposal plant, the environment official pointed out.

She also asked local government officials to be “more conscientious” in addressing the hazardous waste issue at the household level with people now caring for individuals diagnosed with COVID-19 at home, as patients quickly fill up isolation facilities and hospitals.

She said masks and other hazardous wastes must be separated from other household trash and put in a black garbage bag.

The Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 states that: “These [household hazardous] wastes are usually handled separately from other residential and commercial wastes.”

<https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2021/4/14/hospital-waste-piles-up-pandemic.html>