

Animal Bite Treatment Package Launched

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http://www.philhealth.gov.ph/news/2012/bite_treatment.html

IN support of the National Rabies Prevention and Control Program, the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) today launches its Animal Bite Treatment Package (ABTP) by defraying the cost of post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) treatment to all qualified PhilHealth beneficiaries.

The ABTP is worth P3,000.00 and covers the cost of providing Post-exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) services such as vaccines, immunoglobulin, antibiotics, and supplies. It primarily covers dog bites, but persons bitten by other domestic animals such as cats and livestock such as cows, pigs, horses, goats, as well as wild animals like bats and monkeys, may be covered.

It can also be availed of for Category III Rabies Exposure that includes trans-dermal bites such as puncture wounds, lacerations and avulsions, or scratches/abrasions with spontaneous bleeding. *"The package is also applicable to members who had exposure to rabies patients through bites, contamination of mucous membranes or open skin lesions with body fluids through splattering and mouth-to-mouth resuscitation,"* said PhilHealth President and CEO Dr. Eduardo P. Banzon.

Also considered for the package are situations brought about by handling of infected carcass, ingestion of raw infected meat, Category II rabies exposure involving the head and neck and patients with repeat exposures.

"Rabies is fatal, and without proper care, it can kill those who are infected. Statistics show that 200 to 300 deaths occur locally each year due to rabies, with the majority being children under 15 years old. It continues to be a public health problem in our country, that is why we have included this package in our priorities this year," Banzon said.

Emphasizing that *"not a single Filipino must die due to preventable diseases like rabies" and that "everyone must be able to access the care they need when they need it,"*

Banzon said that the new benefit package is available to all members under all categories: Employed, Individually Paying, Overseas Workers, Sponsored and Lifetime members.

To avail of the package, employed and individually paying members including those under organized groups, must have three months' contributions within a six-month period prior to the month of availment. On the other hand, sponsored and OFW-members may avail of the package within the validity period stated in their enhanced Member Data Records or ID cards, while lifetime members need only to show their LMP ID cards. Availment shall be charged one (1) day against the annual 45-day benefit limit for members and dependents.

Stressing the government agency's preferential bias towards the less privileged sector of society, Banzon said the 'No Balance Billing' or the '*walang dagdag bayad*' policy applies to sponsored members and their qualified dependents in ABTCs.

"In no instance must the sponsored member or his dependents be charged for any fees or expenses included in the PEP items," he said.

The ABTP shall be paid directly to Animal Bite Treatment Centers (ABTCs) recognized by the Department of Health and in private Animal Bite Centers (ABCs) that have signified their commitment to and participation in the provision of the package.