

Republic of the Philippines  
**Department of Education**  
REGION IV-A CALABARZON



26 February 2026



**Regional Memorandum**

No.142 s.2026

**DATA GATHERING FOR THE STUDY “LUNAS ESKWELA  
LEVERAGING, UNDERSTANDING, AND NAVIGATING  
ACCESS TO SCHOOL BASED HIV TESTING  
FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE  
PHILIPPINES”**

To **Schools Division Superintendents**

1. In reference to attached communication from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Operations, Bureau of Learner Support Services, this Office hereby endorses the request for data gathering and conduct of the study on secondary schools in DepEd CALABARZON. This is in assistance to **Dr. Rossana A. Ditangco**, Chief of the Clinical Research Division at the Department of Parasitology, Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM).
2. All other details related to the request can be found in the enclosed endorsement.
3. For queries, please coordinate directly with Ms Jhoys Guevarra via email at [lunas.eskwela@ritm.gov.ph](mailto:lunas.eskwela@ritm.gov.ph) or through mobile number 09939264082.
4. For dissemination to and compliance of all concerned.

  
**ATTY. ALBERTO T. ESCOBARTE, CESO II**  
Regional Director 

Copy furnished:

**Dr. Rosanna A. Ditangco**  
Chief, Clinical Research Division  
RITM  
[lunas.eskwela@ritm.gov.ph](mailto:lunas.eskwela@ritm.gov.ph)

07/ROP5/ROP1



Address: Gate 2, Karangalan Village, Cainta, Rizal  
Telephone No.: 02-8682-2114 local 470-471  
Email Address: [region4a@deped.gov.ph](mailto:region4a@deped.gov.ph)  
Website: [depedcalabarzon.ph](http://depedcalabarzon.ph)



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26 January 2026

**ATTY. ALBERTO T. ESCOBARTE, CESO II**

Regional Director

Department of Education Region IV-A

Gate 2, Karangalan Village, Cainta, Rizal



**Subject: Request for Endorsement to Obtain List of Secondary Schools  
(Grades 7–12) for the LUNAS Eskwela Research Study**

Dear Atty. Escobarte,

I am writing to respectfully follow up with your office regarding the research study entitled "*LUNAS Eskwela: Leveraging, Understanding, and Navigating Access to School-based HIV Testing for High School Students in the Philippines.*" This study seeks to generate evidence that will inform policies and interventions aimed at improving adolescents' access to HIV testing through school-based strategies.

As indicated in our previous communication dated January 8, 2026, the LUNAS Eskwela Project has received approval for implementation from the Institutional Review Board of the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM).

In line with our preparatory activities, we respectfully request the **endorsement of your office to the Schools Division Offices under Region IV-A** to facilitate the provision of data on secondary schools offering Grades 7–12, classified as **(1) Public, (2) Private Sectarian, and (3) Private Non-Sectarian**. This classification is essential to ensure equitable representation of schools in the selection of study sites. May we also kindly request that the following information be included in the data to be provided:

- School Name
- School Address
- School Contact Information (email address and/or phone number)
- Curricular Offering Classification  
(Grades 7–10, Grades 11–12, or Grades 7–12)

For any questions or clarifications regarding this request, you may contact Ms. Jhoys Guevarra via email at [lunas.eskwela@ritm.gov.ph](mailto:lunas.eskwela@ritm.gov.ph) or through mobile number 0993-926-4082.





We remain committed to implementing this study responsibly and in close coordination with the Department of Education. All research activities will strictly comply with DepEd policies and guidelines, child protection standards, and the ethical requirements governing research involving minors.

We look forward to your favorable consideration of this request. Thank you very much for your continued support and guidance.  
Respectfully yours,

Respectfully yours,

**ROSSANA DITANGCO, MD, FPCP, FPSMID**  
Principal Investigator, Lunas Eskwela Project  
Chief, Clinical Research Division  
Department of Health – Research Institute for Tropical Medicine

Approved by:

**ATTY. ANA LIZA P. HOMBRADO-DURAN, MD, FPPS, JD, MMHOA, MMPHA**  
Director IV  
Department of Health – Research Institute for Tropical Medicine



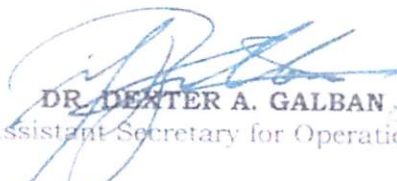


Republic of the Philippines  
**Department of Education**  
**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR OPERATIONS**  
**BUREAU OF LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES**  
School Health Division | School Sports Division | Youth Formation Division

**1st Endorsement**  
February 5, 2025

Respectfully transmitted to **ALBERTO T. ESCOBARTE**, Regional Director, DepEd Region IV-A, the herein proposed Research from Dr. Rossana A. Ditango, Chief, Clinical Research Division, Department of Parasitology, Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM), requesting to conduct a study on "**LUNAS Eskwela**": **L**everaging, **U**nderstanding, and **N**avigating **A**ccess to **S**chool-based HIV testing for High School Students in the Philippines, for appropriate action.

The matter is being transmitted considering that the concern is in the area of your jurisdiction and may be best addressed by your Office.

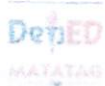
  
**DR. DEXTER A. GALBAN**  
Assistant Secretary for Operations

Incl: as stated

Copy Furnished:

Dr. Rossana A. Ditango  
Chief, Clinical Research Division  
RITM

ref :



M-505, Mahin Building, DepEd Complex, Marikina Avenue, Pasig City 1600  
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Doc. Ref. Code	PAWIM F 023	Rev	01
Effectivity	09.20.21	Page	3 of 5

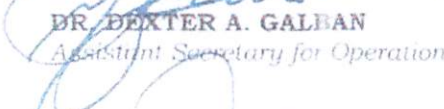





Republic of the Philippines  
Department of Education  
BUREAU OF LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

MEMORANDUM

FOR :   
**DR. DEXTER A. GALBAN**  
*Assistant Secretary for Operations*

FROM :   
**DR. MIGUEL ANGELO S. MANTARING**  
*Director IV  
Bureau of Learner Support Services*

SUBJECT : **REPLY LETTER WITH COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
AND AN ENDORSEMENT TO REGIONS III, IV-A, AND NCR ON THE  
PROPOSED RESEARCH ON HIV TESTING FOR SECONDARY  
LEARNERS IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS**

DATE : February 5, 2025

This Office respectfully submits the following documents for your approval:

- a. Reply letter to **Dr. Rossana A. Ditangco**, Chief of the Clinical Research Division at the Department of Parasitology, Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM), requesting to conduct a study on "*LUNAS Eskwela*": **L**everaging, **U**nderstanding, and **N**avigating **A**ccess to **S**chool-based HIV Testing for High School Students in the Philippines.
- b. Endorsement to the Regional Directors of Regions III, IV-A, and NCR regarding the aforementioned request.

Thank you very much.



NOTICE OF RESEARCH PROTOCOL APPROVAL

1. PROTOCOL IDENTIFICATION

IRB Number 12-0-2-5-1-1-1-3-1

Title of Protocol "Lunas Eskweta": Leveraging, Understanding, and Navigating Access to School-based HIV testing for High School Students in the Philippines

Name of Investigator ROSSANA A. DITANGCO, MD, FPCP, FPSMID

Sponsor Disease Prevention and Control Bureau, Department of Health

Type of IRB Review Conducted on Protocol  Full  Expedited

Date of latest Full Review 10-17-2025  
mm dd yyyy

2. APPROVED DOCUMENTS

The following documents have been reviewed and given approval for use:

	Name of Document	Version Number or Date
2.1.	Protocol	Version 4.0 dated 5 November 2025
2.2.	ICF for KAP Survey in Parents (English & Filipino)	Version 4.0 dated 5 November 2025
2.3.	ICF for School Facility Survey in School Officials (English)	Version 3.0 dated 5 November 2025
2.4.	ICF for IDI of School Staff and Policy Makers (English)	Version 4.0 dated 5 November 2025
2.5.	Student ICF for KAP Survey in Students ≥18 years (English & Filipino)	Version 4.0 dated 5 November 2025
2.6.	Parental ICF for KAP Survey in Students 13-14 years (English & Filipino)	Version 4.0 dated 5 November 2025
2.7.	Parental ICF & Student IAF for KAP Survey in Students 15-17 years (English & Filipino)	Version 4.0 dated 5 November 2025
2.8.	Student IAF for KAP Survey in Students 13-14 years (English & Filipino)	Version 4.0 dated 5 November 2025
2.9.	Comprehension questions (English and Filipino)	Version 1.0, dated 17 June 2025
2.10.	Student survey questionnaire (English and Filipino)	Version 3.0, dated 29 August 2025
2.11.	Parents Survey Questionnaire (English and Filipino)	Version 3.0, dated 29 August 2025
2.12.	In-Depth Interview guide for teachers/school health workers/school officials/policy makers (English)	Version 3.0, dated 29 August 2025
2.13.	Facility survey (English)	Version 2.0, dated 17 June 2025
2.14.	In-Depth interview guide for Students (English)	Version 3.0, dated 29 August 2025
2.15.	In-Depth interview guide for Parents (English)	Version 2.0, dated 29 August 2025
2.16.	Invitation Flyer (English & Filipino)	Version 2 dated 5 November 2025
2.17.	CV, GCP Certificate, Accomplished COI Form: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rossana A. Ditangco, MD, FPCP, FPSMID</li> <li>• Anna Maureen Dungca-Lorilla, MD</li> </ul>	N/A





<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mariannette T. Inobaya, PhD</li> <li>• Mark Donald C. Reñosa, RN, MSN, MSChI, DNS, PhD</li> <li>• Johanna Beulah T. Sornillo, RMT, MPH</li> </ul>	
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**3. IRB MEMBERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE REVIEW**

1	Edison R. Alberto, MD	6	Jeniffer M. Landicho, RL, MOHRE
2	Joanne De Jesus-Cornejo, MD	7	Bianca Joyce T. Sornillo, MAHPS
3	Beatriz P. Quiambao, MD	8	Felicidad H. Romualdez
4	Salud B. Zaldivar, RN, MA	9	Mario Antonio L. Jiz II, PhD
5	Mari Rose A. De Los Reyes, MD	10	Fe Esperanza J. Espino, MD, PhD

**4. APPROVAL DETAILS**

Date of Approval	Date of Expiry of Approval	Date of Continuing Review
9 December 2025	9 December 2026	9 November 2026

**EDISON R. ALBERTO, MD**

Signature over Name of IRB Chair

**10 December 2025**

Date of Signing





IRB Protocol Number |\_2\_||\_0\_||\_2\_||\_5\_| - |\_1\_||\_3\_|  
Title of Protocol "Lunas Eskwela": Leveraging, Understanding, and Navigating Access to School-based HIV testing for High School Students in the Philippines  
Name of Investigator **ROSSANA A. DITANGCO, MD, FPCP, FPSMID**

10 December 2025

**ROSSANA A. DITANGCO, MD, FPCP, FPSMID**  
Principal Investigator

Dear Dr. Ditangco,

Attached please find the IRB Approval of your New Research Application. With this notification, you can now start your research activities. Please take note of your post approval responsibilities:

1. Conduct your research in compliance with all international and national guidelines and regulations, principles of Good Clinical Practice and ethical research.
2. Conduct your research based on the currently approved protocol and protocol related documents.
3. Inform and obtain approval from the IRB for any modifications or changes in the study protocol and/or informed consent documents **before** it is going to be implemented.
4. Report to the IRB any violation or deviation of this currently approved version of the protocol and informed consent documents.
5. Submit Progress Report **every 6 months**.
6. Please inform the IRB if the study has already commenced.
7. Obtain a Renewal of Approval from the IRB at least **one month** prior to the expiry of the current approval.
8. Inform the IRB when the study is completed or terminated.
9. Submit 1 hard copy (clean version) of approved Informed Consent Documents for stamping.

Henceforth, please use your IRB Number in all your communications to the IRB to facilitate processing of application.

Truly yours,

  
**EDISON R. ALBERTO, MD**

Chair, Institutional Review Board

10 December 2025

