



Senate of the Philippines

JOEL VILLANUEVA

Senator

Comments and Recommendations on the Twelfth (June 15) Report on the Implementation of the Bayanihan Act (RA 11469)

17 June 2020

Here are our comments and recommendations on the measures currently being implemented to address the COVID-19 pandemic and mitigate its impact:

Financial Risk Protection of COVID-19 Patients

- 1. We would like to commend the DOH for its efforts to improve its online portal (<https://ncovtracker.doh.gov.ph/>), accommodating some of our previous suggestions relevant to disclosing COVID-19 statistics.**

To further improve it, we recommend adding statistics measuring how well we have achieved the objectives of the Universal Health Care (UHC) amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, in line with the spirit of the “Bayanihan to Heal As One Act.”

Specifically, we would like to know how many of the over 19,000 active COVID-19 cases in the country are *currently admitted* in hospitals, and how they are broken down into direct and indirect contributors of PhilHealth.

Under the UHC Law, every Filipino is automatically a member of PhilHealth. Hence, we would also like to see updates on the number of patients discharged from hospitals after having recovered from COVID-19 who were able to reduce/reimburse their costs under PhilHealth’s case rate package.

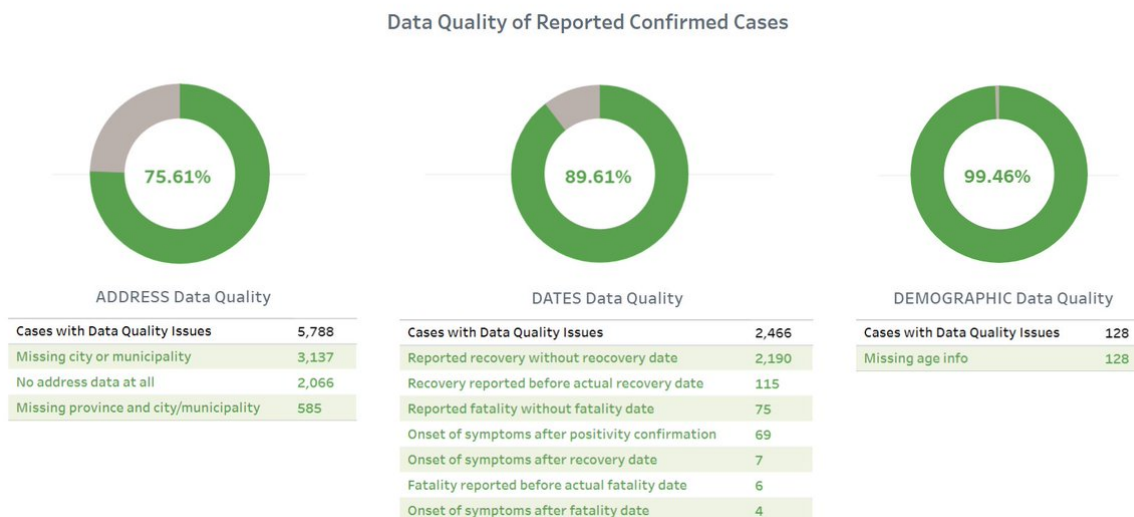
PhilHealth should also disclose the average percentage of patients’ COVID-19 hospital charges it is able shoulder (i.e. the support value of the COVID-19 package). In addition, there must be regular updates on how much COVID-19 patient pay in excess of the case rates determined by PhilHealth, and how many of the admitted COVID-19 patients have been assessed to have no capacity to pay the excess of the case rates.

We would also like to reiterate our previous recommendation to include updates on the current number of asymptomatic patients with confirmed COVID-19 cases, and the number of confirmed COVID-19 patients who are

currently recovering. Among others, such information can help assess potential shortage in the available facilities.

Data Quality of Reported Confirmed Cases

- According to data analyst Andrei Diamante, almost 6,000 positive cases in the country lack information on location.¹ Such issue on missing or incomplete geographical data has implications on the contact tracing efforts both by the national and the local governments.



Monitoring Recovered COVID-19 Patients

- We seek to clarify the main reason behind DOH's recent public dissemination efforts calling for recovered COVID-19 patients (as of May 1) to self-report their status (see poster below).² We would like to know if the said updating is not part of the ongoing contact tracing efforts, or if issues such as loss or alteration of information make it difficult or impossible for DOH to reach out to these patients on its own.



¹ https://twitter.com/_dreii/status/1270990671583690753/photo/1

² https://www.facebook.com/OfficialDOHgov/photos/a.157979910879936/3379083302102898/?type=3&eid=AR AQ2MkrFywebfkjQGdodanpXWSTCQqBhp2ddrCDK17cjP0cOI73Wh1beX5erLuewjKORugFfEO5Xbtf&__tn__=EEHH-R

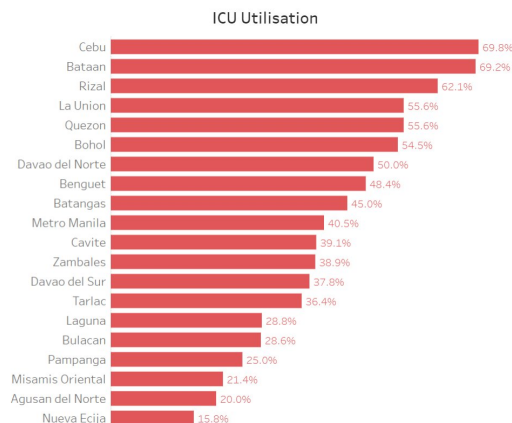
Securing Adequate COVID-19 Treatment and Quarantine Facilities; Taking Preemptive Measures (e.g. on Buffer Beds) in Preparation for the Probable Consequences of the Lifting of Quarantine Measures

4. We hope to see a concrete plan on ensuring the adequacy of COVID-19 facilities. While the 12th Bayanihan Report stated that the occupancy rate of COVID-19 dedicated beds is only at 33.9% as of June 10, 2020, the city-level data presents a relatively alarming picture, where some areas have utilization rate as high as 69% for Intensive Care Units (ICUs).

Another example is the experience relayed by Dr. Legaspi, Director of the Philippine General Hospital (PGH). PGH receives patients from Manila, Paranaque, Pasay, Makati, Mandaluyong, San Juan and Las Piñas, as well as Bureau of Corrections and other quarantine facilities, and is currently facing an increase in patient admissions due to more people being tested.

We also previously requested to see a granulated data of available and occupied COVID-19 beds, by type of hospital across regions. Such information on occupancy rates is necessary to assess the health sector’s capacity to accommodate cases during the peak of the pandemic and to determine the areas that are most vulnerable to shortage of beds once cases surge.

- According to data analyst Andrei Diamante, there are provinces with high utilization rate for Intensive Care Units (ICUs) and mechanical ventilators.³ Among the areas, which may face shortage in ICU beds (considering their utilization rates) are Cebu and Bataan.



- We also note that there are also areas without ICU or mechanical ventilator. Carcar City and Toledo City, both in the province of Cebu, are also two of seven cities in the country where there are at least three confirmed cases, but with no single ICU or mechanical ventilator. The other areas are Navotas (with over 200 COVID-19 cases), Baybay, Leyte (with over 15 cases), Alaminos, Pangasinan, Ligao, Albay, and Tabaco, Albay.⁴

³ https://twitter.com/_dre/status/1272869712313978880/photo/1

⁴ https://twitter.com/_dre/status/1272870968738738176

- The UP COVID-19 Pandemic Response team⁵ estimated that the peak of pandemic—where 51,933 Filipinos would need hospitalization, of which 13,194 would be critical cases requiring ICU treatment—may overwhelm the health system capacity, especially in Metro Manila, which faces a serious shortage in hospital beds. The paper also stated that three provinces adjacent to NCR, namely Bulacan, Cavite, and Rizal, may also face serious shortage of hospital beds for handling severe and critical cases.

5. **We would also like to reiterate our request for a concrete plan on addressing the potential shortage of beds for suspected and probable cases (those with mild or critical symptoms and are yet to be tested or are awaiting conclusive results).**

As of June 15, 2020, beds for probable or suspected cases totaled 34,194. As of the same date, the NDDRMC reports that there are a total of 23,092 suspected cases and 7,948 probable cases⁶—hence, the gap of the quarantine capacity only have a remaining 3,154 compared to the total suspect or probable cases of 31,040.

Provision of Primary Care Consultations Through Telehealth To Address Surge in Demand for COVID-19 Demand Consultations

6. **According to DOH, many hospitals have been experiencing a surge of consultations regarding COVID-19, many of which can actually be managed at the *primary care level*. One solution that has been identified to reduce the unnecessary traffic in hospitals is to promote the use of teleconsultation.**

Hence, we would like to know: how many *telehealth* companies are able to provide free primary care consultations on COVID-19? In the past month, how many patients or calls have these telehealth partners, including DOH’s hotlines, accommodated in total? Is the total capacity of these hotlines adequate?

It is among the vision of the UHC Act to assign each Filipino to a primary care provider (health worker) who shall be the first contact for health care needs. Primary care providers will deliver free essential health services and will guide patients through the different health care facilities.⁷

⁵ https://www.up.edu.ph/estimating-local-healthcare-capacity-to-deal-with-covid-19-case-surge-analysis-and-recommendations/?fbclid=IwAR0TxLDXj6lAy-DBBfsWH3vtMu36Vd-JG0E7XnF9KDF4O9TpktDeAGNv_N0

⁶ http://www.ndrrmc.gov.ph/attachments/article/4036/Update_re_NTF_for_COVID-19_Situational_Report_No_76.pdf

⁷ <https://www.doh.gov.ph/press-releases/duque-signs-irr-of-universal-health-care-law>

Assistance to Workers and Small Businesses

7. **We would like to inquire whether or not the DOF retains the original target of serving 3.4 million MSME workers under the Small Business Wage Subsidy (SBWS) Program. As reported in the 12th (June 15) Bayanihan Report, the DOF has completed the payout to only 2.96 million employees, a few days before the set payout deadline of June 17, 2020.**
 - The payout dates for the second tranche payment under SBWS program was adjusted to May 16, 2020 to June 17, 2020. As of the June 15 Report, of 2.96 million employees have received their wage subsidies.
8. **The government should relax stringent regulations to enforce taxation laws on small businesses, such as online sellers during the height of the pandemic. Instead, it should look into the strict enforcement of tax laws against potential large taxpayers such as POGOs.**
 - The POGO industry has very little contribution to the country's GDP, having only Php7 billion in net financial inflows (or 0.04% of GDP) from 2017 to 2019. In contrast, it owes Php50 billion in unpaid taxes, which is 3.6 times as large as the Php14 billion taxes and fees it paid in 2019.
9. **We recommend disclosing more details on the various loans obtained by the government to address the impacts of COVID-19. Specifically, we hope to see a list of the amounts and terms of the loans, the status of disbursements and utilization of the funds, the beneficiaries, and such other relevant information as may be appropriate to properly apprise the public of the government's efforts to combat COVID-19.**

Assistance to OFWs and Locally Stranded Individuals (LSIs)

10. **We would like to know the reason behind the slow performance with respect to providing assistance to the 250,000 target beneficiaries under the DOLE's AKAP. The number of applicants to the program had long reached 500,000—higher than what the budget can accommodate—but the performance as of the 12th Bayanihan Report (61.3%) showed very little improvement from the 11th (56.8%) and the 10th Reports (51.4%).**
 - DOLE's AKAP for displaced OFWs has recorded an accomplishment rate of 61.32%, having only served 153,322 of its target 250,000 beneficiaries. It has also utilized Php1.568 billion of its Php2.5 billion budget.
11. **Recently, it was reported that a number of locally stranded individuals (LSIs) were left to sleep outside Terminal 3 and under the airport bridges in Pasay.⁸ We seek updates as to their status and the efforts undertaken to assist them. We hope to know the cause of delay in these sweeper flights, and whether they were offered temporary lodging in nearby hotels.**

⁸ gmanetwork.com/news/news/metro/742067/200-passengers-stranded-at-naia-sleep-under-trees-expressway/story/

Online and Blended Learning in Basic Education

12. **We hope that the Department of Education (DepEd) can present a clear plan on the use of radio and television as part of its strategy to deliver education under the New Normal. We recognize that radio and television can be a cost-effective and cheap medium of primary and secondary education especially for public school students who cannot buy laptops and/or tablets.**

- In India, for instance, the government has created the Swayam Prabha system, a group of 32 free TV channels that show public educational programs using satellite technology.⁹
- DepEd also has to present a clear and realistic plan on how it will roll out blended learning in the coming school year, especially with the new school year less than two months away. In a survey conducted by Coordinating Council of Private Educational Associations (COCOPEA), 35% of students have no access to stable internet; 30% of students have no access to flexible learning materials (both online and offline); 50% of students are struggling to access online learning materials due to connectivity problems; 60% of teachers are skeptical of or resistant to conducting online classes; and 60% of schools are not able to provide training for teachers with regard the conduct of online classes. Meanwhile, in a Philippine Business for Education (PBED) webinar, it was shared that the ratio of computer to learners in the primary level is 1:412; close to 80% of public schools in the country are still without internet access; 55% of educators have no internet connectivity; and 11% of educators have no laptop or desktops. Given these dismal statistics, it is all the more imperative that DepEd, CHED and all SUCs be able to present a concrete plan to continue the delivery of learning amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. These figures also highlight the need for the swifter implementation of the Free Wifi in Public Spaces Act.

⁹ <https://swayamprabha.gov.in/index.php/>

Measures to Minimize Spread of COVID-19 in the Judicial Offices

13. **We commend the actions taken by the judiciary and the Department of Justice in lessening jail congestion such as the grant of parole to 165 Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) during the community quarantine period.¹⁰ In light of these developments, we hope that the government will continue to adapt measures in our judicial system to minimize the spread of COVID-19.**

An important step towards this direction is the use of technology, and the fast-tracking of the purchase of the same, to enable first-level courts to conduct hearings and other court processes with minimum contact between persons.¹¹

- This recommendation is in light of reports that Halls of Justice have become unsafe due to the proliferation of the virus. For instance, a prosecutor in the Mandaluyong City Hall of Justice has tested positive; and a prosecutor from the Mandaue City Hall of Justice has passed away due to COVID-19.¹² As a result of these incidents, the courtrooms in both areas have been put on total lockdown.¹³

¹⁰ 12th Bayanihan Law Report

¹¹ <https://news.microsoft.com/en-ph/2020/05/15/supreme-court-of-the-philippines-unveils-virtual-courtrooms-during-covid-19-community-quarantine/>

¹² <https://news.microsoft.com/en-ph/2020/05/15/supreme-court-of-the-philippines-unveils-virtual-courtrooms-during-covid-19-community-quarantine/>

Summary of Unaddressed Concerns

1. According to DOH, the estimated number of health care workers in hospitals is 16,490, taking into account all available health care workers and proposals for augmentation. As of June 13, 2020, a total of 3,807 health care workers have been hired out of the total 9,297 slots approved.¹⁴

While the DOH has provided the number of health care workers needed, it has not provided the total number of available health care workers in the country. This is crucial in determining whether the deployment ban of health care workers (and the consequent impacts to their lives and livelihood) is prudent. Based on an article published in Business World, allowing the deployment of the 643 health care workers affected by the deployment ban will not adversely impact the supply of medical workers in the country, as there is still more than 300,000 available licensed nurses.¹⁵

Thus, we reiterate our request for DOH to present the target number of health care workers (HCWs) that both the public and private health sectors require to address the COVID-19 pandemic, and to estimate the shortage from the current pool of health care workers in the country.

In addition, DOLE and DOH must provide the affected healthcare workers (i) assistance, which could come in the form of DOLE's CAMP-AKAP, and (ii) local employment options in healthcare facilities while the deployment ban is in place, and estimate the number of workers who do not benefit from any of these two.¹⁶ They must also coordinate information and protocols on HCW-OFWs and ensure that returning OFW-HCWs and stranded HCWs are integrated into the DOH health human resource hiring.

2. As the second tranche of financial assistance is about to be rolled out, we look forward to see a national database system of qualified beneficiaries in order to ensure that the implementation of future programs of this kind, will be smoother and more efficient.
3. While the government is continuously promoting the use of the StaySafe app as a means to improve contact tracing, we continue to look forward to the government's explanation on the data protection and other key features of the application. Given the recent incident of cloning of multiple Facebook accounts, it is all the more imperative that the government provide assurance to our citizens on the safety features of this application. We also seek to get an updated report on the number of users of the application and the efforts being done by the government and its partner to encourage more users and to improve its interoperability and safety features.

¹⁴ DOH Responses, 7th to 10th Senate Oversight Committee

¹⁵ <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/06/04/nursing-wounds-a-closer-look-at-the-nurses-deployment-ban/>

¹⁶ Currently, only healthcare workers who have been granted Overseas Employment Certificates as of March 8 are allowed to go abroad;

4. We also previously suggested that in order to detect potential underreporting of COVID-19 deaths, the DOH or the Bayanihan Reports should include regular updates on the number of individuals tagged as suspect and probable cases who have died without being tested yet for COVID-19.
5. Despite having regularly raised the issue of the seemingly geographically-limited target beneficiaries of the SAP for Drivers, none of the Bayanihan Reports confirmed nor provide any information whether drivers outside of NCR are also included in the program. Considering that most, if not all, PUV and TNVS drivers remain to be affected by the General Community Quarantine, it is unfortunate that the DSWD and the LTFRB still have not responded to our request. On June 9, a transport group lamented that 90% of jeepney drivers and operators in the country are already starving.¹⁷
6. We hope that the government will be able to give assurance to employers and employees that proper government assistance with regard to testing of returning employees will be given, especially as more people are expected to return to work with the shift to General Community Quarantine.
 - We also hope that the relevant government offices would clarify their guidelines on the testing of employees, stating that only a sample of the returning employees needs to be tested. In this regard, we note that while the Guidelines on Workplace Prevention and Control of COVID-19 issued by DTI and DOLE provides that “[e]mployers may test workers for COVID-19,” the guidelines issued by DPWH¹⁸ provides that “[c]onstruction personnel shall be required to undergo any available COVID-19 test.”
7. The threat of COVID-19 infection that our health frontliners face remains to be alarming. With the expected increase in cases (partly due to the gradual easing of restrictions), we hope to see a more concrete plan to reduce such risks, especially the provision of adequate and quality PPEs and proper information dissemination on the correct protocols to avoid community transmission.
 - As of June 16, 2020, the DOH reported that there had been 2,869 healthcare personnel infected by COVID-19.¹⁹ This constitutes 11.3% of the total cases in the country, which is significantly higher compared to the infection rate of 2-3% for healthcare workers in the Western Pacific.²⁰
 - In light of the death of PCapt. Casey C. Gutierrez, M.D. of the PNP Health Service, we hope that lapses in the treatment, decontamination, and isolation protocols in National Government and LGU quarantine centers are identified and corrected at the soonest possible time.²¹
 - We understand that the World Health Organization and the UP PGH recently partnered together to find out the factors that may be placing

¹⁷ <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/06/10/20/90-percent-of-jeepney-drivers-bus-drivers-starving-dying-transport-group>

¹⁸ DPWH Department Order No. 25, series of 2020 dated May 4, 2020.

¹⁹ covid19stats.ph/stats Accessed June 2, 2020

²⁰ <https://www.cnn.ph/news/2020/4/22/COVID-19-frontliners-healthcare-workers-coronavirus.html>

²¹ <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/06/09/nbi-starts-probe-on-disinfectant-death-of-pnp-doctor/>

frontline healthcare workers at risk of COVID-19 infection. We hope to be apprised of the results of this research once available.

8. We laud the efforts of the government in improving the quality and quantity of quarantine facilities. However, there remains to be questions as to the administration of quarantine protocols.
 - We hope that there is a clear delineation of duties among the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), DOH, Bureau of Quarantine (BOQ), Department of Tourism (DOT) and other government agencies in the management of privately commissioned quarantine facilities. More specifically, returning Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) should be guided on which agency they should coordinate with before, during and after undergoing the 14-day mandatory quarantine.
 - Moreover, we note that there has been increasing number of confirmed cases in provinces, like Marawi City, as a result of the Balik Probinsya Program.²² We hope that the government will have a concrete plan to ensure that those returning to the provinces are properly isolated and tested prior to going home to protect the local citizens from potential transmission of the virus, or a thorough coordination between the national government agencies and the LGUs is undertaken with regard the quarantining and testing of the Balik Probinsya beneficiaries.
9. We also wish to convey our disagreement to the decision of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID or Task Force) on classifying the Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators (POGOs) as members of the BPO sector. On May 5, 2020, we sent a letter to IATF-EID, thru Secretary Duque, regarding this matter. Unfortunately, we have not received any response from the Task Force.
 - It is our humble opinion that POGO's not only do not have significant contribution to the economy, but also pose serious threat to our country's efforts to flatten the curve of transmission of COVID-19. Allowing them to re-open when there is still very little testing done, is ill-advised.
10. To reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 upon implementation of GCQ, we recommend that DOLE coordinate and monitor all establishments, especially those that recorded poor compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Standards (OSHS) in the most recent DOLE inspections, and ensure that they are aware of the proposed protocol for screening employees and visitors. We also hope that DOLE will provide a clearer set of guidelines on the safety and health protocols that must be adhered to at this time.
11. We hope that the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) can fast track the disbursement of the TES funds and assist beneficiaries that have difficulty completing the submission of their documents due to the ongoing lockdown.²³

²² <https://twitter.com/i/web/status/1270596838958051335>

²³ The 10th Bayanihan Report states that of the 120,798 target student-beneficiaries, 67,650 were already able to receive their Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES).²³ This means that 44% of the target student-beneficiaries have yet to receive their TES.

12. We hope to see a concrete plan and the relevant timelines that the Department of Education (DepEd) has set in relation to the preparation and dissemination of the distance learning *curriculum* before the opening of school on August.
 - This adds to our previous request to see a comprehensive assessment of issues with alternative learning systems the teaching workforce and educational institutions may currently have (such as lack of access to internet and computers by some students), which may hamper the delivery and effectiveness of education once classes resume.
13. We hope to see a more reasonable transportation plan to move workers in light of the limited capacity and number of mass transportation systems due to the imposition of social distancing measures. Workers play a vital role in the revival of the economy, and their mobility is a key factor in this effort.
 - In an interview with CNN, Secretary Tugade stated that the Department of Transportation never promised that the available transport system will be able to transport all people once the General Community Quarantine is in place. However, we note that during the public hearing conducted by the Senate Committee on Public Services, LTFRB Chairman assured that there will be enough transportation to meet the expected demand.²⁴
 - We hope that our transport regulators are able to make adjustments in their plans and strategies in the coming days so that our workers will not have to worry how to get to work, and at the same time, increase their risk of contracting COVID-19. We also hope to see better coordination among DOTr and its attached agencies (like LTFRB) in ensuring that there is really enough transportation services to meet the demand. In addition, we also hope to see plans and updates on the enforcement of the social distancing and safety protocols in public transportation with the recent lifting of NCR's Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine to a GCQ.
14. Given the limited transportation, the MMDA and LGUs, in coordination with DPWH and DOTr should expedite the establishment of bike lanes.
15. We hope to know the regional and local distribution of contact tracers nationwide, by type of facility of designation and type of work. We note that contact tracing is also among the temporary jobs the government is eyeing to offer under the cash-for-work scheme under Bayanihan 2. Hence, more details on workers involved in this would not only provide information on the efforts to increase COVID-19 surveillance, but on the appropriateness or effectiveness of contact tracing in easing the impact of the pandemic on the labor sector.

²⁴ TSN, May 11, 2020 Committee on Public Services Hearing, at p. 95. "“Kami po iyong nag-compute noong porsiyento ng mga populasyon na pwedeng lumabas at kukuha ng public transport. Well, probably mostly workers will be going out to work but we are not also discounting other people who may be allowed to work but with fewer option to go out of their houses because of restricted activities. Be that as it may, we already have made some computations also on our capacity to address the expected demand...as it may be. We are looking at insofar as across the modes of public transport from buses P to P, PUJ, UV and shuttle service and the numbers that we are looking at, sapat po siya na tutugon doon sa expected demand.”"

16. We hope to know the factors that may have caused or are causing the slowdown in the filling up of approved slots for emergency hiring of human resources for health. We also wish to know if any of the additional hires are OFWs or healthcare workers affected by the deployment ban. This is in line with our persistent call for DOLE and DOH to coordinate with each other to ensure that returning OFWs and other affected healthcare workers are referred, and encouraged to apply, to the hiring program of DOH. Based on an informal discussion with POEA, we were informed that there is still no formal referral system between these agencies regarding the hiring of returning HCW-OFWs.
17. According to the 11th Bayanihan Report, 44% of the 14,629 locally stranded individuals (LSIs) have already returned to their respective provinces. We hope to know the status of the remaining 8,187 LSIs who have failed to do so.
18. Given the shift to blended learning, we wish to reiterate our call for financial and other form of support to all institutions of learning to ensure that their faculty, students and other staff have the appropriate ICT equipment, program and other software to be able to continue learning in the new normal.
 - We also previously requested to see the total number and regional distribution of teachers and stakeholders trained by the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) in relation to the adjustments necessary to deliver online or blended learning. We also hope to see the targeted deadline for these initiatives, as well as the efforts to ensure that the trained teachers and educators have the proper equipment and software to be able to effectively conduct online learning.
19. It can be observed that bigger increases in the new number of cases of COVID-19 may be correlated with the lifting of Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) starting mid-May (for other provinces) and June (for high-risk areas) (see graph below).²⁵ We hope to know a clear plan of action from the government in addressing this rise in new infections.

In addition, we would like to follow up the submission of the “National Action Plan” to the Senate, which was promised during the Committee of the Whole Hearing, as well as the revisions made on the said plan in light of the lifting of lockdowns.

20. We hope to see a concrete plan on the part of the DICT in working with executive agencies to digitalize their frontline processes and services for stakeholders and constituents. Likewise, the DOH must assist these agencies to refine their protocols in protecting the health and occupational safety of their employees.
 - Within this month alone, the BIR has closed its head office as the COVID-19 virus has infected 20 employees.²⁶ The DOJ, on the other hand, had 40 employees who tested positive in a rapid test.²⁷ The possible cessation

²⁵ DOH ncov tracker

²⁶ <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/06/07/bir-closes-head-office-as-20-have-symptoms-of-covid-19/>

²⁷ <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1288657/40-doj-personne-tested-positive-of-covid-19-in-rapid-test>

of operations in these aforementioned offices can put delays in the delivery of services of such agencies.

21. With unemployment rate reaching 17.7% as of April 2020, equivalent to 7 million unemployed Filipinos, we recommend the continuation of the COVID-19 Adjustment Measure Program (CAMP) wage subsidy alongside the Small Wage Business Subsidy (SWBS) Program to cover a wider population in the labor sector.

According to the 11th Bayanihan Report, only 193,000 of the 680,000 CAMP beneficiaries are part of the SBWS. Continuing SBWS (under Bayanihan 2) without continuing CAMP would mean leaving 487,000 workers unassisted.

We also hope that TESDA scholarship programs will be made available and accessible to the affected workers in order to retool, reskill or upskill them to new jobs post-COVID-19.

22. We also seek clarification as to the limited coverage of the Department of Agriculture assistance to Agri-fishery based Micro and Small Entrepreneurs under the Expanded SURE Aid and Recovery Project.

- Under the 11th Bayanihan report, only 150 Agri-fishery based MSEs were target beneficiaries under the Expanded SURE Aid and Recovery Project with an allotted amount of Php1.5 Billion. This is alarming considering that as early as 2017, the Secretary of Agriculture already noted that about 8,195 enterprises are in the agri-forestry-fishery sector.²⁸ We wonder why only 150 enterprises were chosen to receive aid out of the 8,000 agri-fishery MSEs in the country.

23. Considering the fear and anxiety associated with the pandemic, we hope to know how the National Center for Mental Health (NCMH) Crisis Hotline has been effectively utilized. Specifically, we hope to know the number of confirmed COVID-19 patients, suspected and probable cases, and persons under monitoring provided with psychological first aid and processing to address their mental health needs.

- On June 9, 2020, a 48-year-old patient jumped from the third floor window of Vicente Sotto Medical Center in Cebu after he was tested positive for COVID-19.²⁹ A similar incident happened on March 30, 2020, when a 34-year-old man committed suicide in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, after suspecting that he had COVID-19. (The man was later on diagnosed with dengue.)³⁰

²⁸ <https://www.manilatimes.net/2017/04/28/business/columnists-business/msmes-for-agriculture/324429/>

²⁹ <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1288489/covid-19-patient-dies-after-jumping-from-hospital-window-in-cebu>

³⁰ <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/03/30/news/latest-stories/man-who-thought-he-had-covid-commits-suicide/708043/>