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SENATE

P. S. Res. No. 986

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INTRODUCED BY SENATOR VILLAR

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**RESOLUTION**

**URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON HEALTH AND DEMOGRAPHY, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, AND OTHER APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES, TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED SHORTAGE AND/OR LACK OF BOTIKA NG BARANGAY OUTLETS, PARTICULARLY IN THE COUNTRY'S POOREST PROVINCES WHERE THEY ARE MOST NEEDED**

*Whereas*, Article II, Section 15 of the Philippine Constitution provides that, "The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them";

*Whereas*, launched in 2001, the Botika ng Barangay (BnB) program aims to promote equity in health by ensuring the availability and accessibility of affordable, safe and effective, quality, essential drugs to all, with priority for marginalized, underserved, critical and hard to reach areas;

*Whereas*, said program established the creation of an adhoc unit, the Pharma 50, currently named the National Drug Policy – Pharmaceutical Management Unit (NDP-PMU 50) to operationalize, manage and monitor the implementation of all Department of Health (DOH) initiatives, programs and projects, and whose paramount objective is to achieve the reduction of price of drugs and medicines;

*Whereas*, the Botika ng Barangay (BnB) refers to a drug outlet owned and managed by a local government unit, people's organization or community-based organization to sell only over-the-counter (OTC) and selected prescription drugs;

*Whereas*, when a BnB is allowed to operate, the DOH offers seed capital in the form of Php 25,000.00 worth of medicines;

*Whereas*, the main purchaser and supplier of drugs for the DOH and the BnB is Philippine International Trading Co. Pharma Inc. (PPI), a government corporation that procures drugs locally or abroad to enable the BnB program to sell "half-priced medicines";

*Whereas*, a total of 12,341 BnB outlets have been established nationwide as of January 2009;

*Whereas*, DOH targets to establish 15,000 BnB outlets to serve almost 21 million Filipinos by the end of Arroyo's term next year;

*Whereas*, Marlene Bermejo of the Health Action Information Network (HAIN) said that equity in health could never be achieved if only a quarter of the population would benefit from the program;

*Whereas*, according to former Health Secretary Jaime Galvez Tan, there are only 18,000 barangays with botikas out of the 42,000 barangays nationwide;

*Whereas*, President Arroyo, during the inauguration of the 11,000<sup>th</sup> BnB outlet in Camp Bagong Diwa, Taguig on April 11, 2008 stated, “*Kalat na sa buong Pilipinas ang BnB...Ang masa ang pangunahing nakikinabang dito sa mas murang gamut na ipinagbibili*”;

*Whereas*, data released by the Department of Health’s Pharmaceutical Management Unit (PMU) 50 in May 2008 revealed that the BnB program had not in fact reached Lanao del Sur, Tawi-Tawi, Compostela Valley, Siquijor, Batanes, Marinduque and Sulu, which are among the country’s poorest provinces;

*Whereas*, the 2007 BnB list left out 15 out of the top 40 poorest towns in the country;

*Whereas*, around 200 BnB outlets have closed since the program started in 2001 because of flawed management and bankruptcy, translating to at least P5 million losses in seed capital;

*Whereas*, former Health Secretary Carmencita Reodica attributed the wastage of government resources to the weak logistics of the health department’s regional units, and the poor inventory and management of BnB operators: Now therefore be it

RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, to urge the Senate Committees on Health and Demography, Local Government, and other appropriate committees, to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the reported shortage and/or lack of Botika ng Barangay outlets, particularly in the country’s poorest provinces where they are most needed.

Adopted,

  
MANNY VILLAR  
Senator