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SENATE

P. S. Res. No. 1015

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INTRODUCED BY THE HONORABLE MAR ROXAS

A RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND COMMERCE AND THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND DEMOGRAPHY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE PANDEMIC POTENTIAL OF THE NEW STRAIN OF SWINE FLU VIRUS THAT HAS CAUSED DEATHS AND INFECTIONS TO PEOPLE IN MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES TO ENSURE THE AVAILABILITY AND AFFORDABILITY OF NECESSARY VACCINES AND MEDICINES TO PATIENTS AFFECTED BY THE VIRUS IN THE COUNTRY AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, Section 13, Article XII of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, mandates the State to “pursue a trade policy that serves the general welfare and utilizes all forms and arrangements of exchange on the basis of equality and reciprocity;”

WHEREAS, Section 11, Article XIII of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, further mandates the State to “adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall endeavor to make essential goods, health and other social services available to all the people at affordable cost;”

WHEREAS, the Swine Flu is a highly contagious respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza, which do not normally infect humans, however, human infections with swine flu do occur and spreads through tiny particles in the air or by direct physical contact;

WHEREAS, according to news reports, a new strain of swine flu virus has killed more than 80 people and likely sickened more than a thousand people in Mexico since 13 April 2009; and infected more than 10 people in the United States, 2 in France, and 1 in Israel;

WHEREAS, World Health Organization Director General Margaret Chan stated that the outbreak of the new virus has “pandemic potential” if it mutates into a form that is easily transmissible between humans, hence, labeling the current outbreak “a public health emergency of international concern;”

WHEREAS, according to Dr. Eric Tayag of the National Epidemiology Center of the Department of Health, “there is still no case of the swine flu” in the Philippines;

WHEREAS, to prevent the entry into the Philippines of the new swine flu virus, the Department of Health has ordered the thermal screening of inbound passengers at the country's ports entry;

WHEREAS, Department of Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap also ordered a ban on pork imports from the United States and Mexico as a precaution;

WHEREAS, symptoms of swine flu in humans are similar to the symptoms of the common flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, sore muscles, vomiting and diarrhea, however, there is still no vaccine against the new swine flu virus;

WHEREAS, swine flu virus appears to respond to treatment with oseltamivir (Tamiflu) and zanamivir (Relenza), and maintaining proper hygiene is still the best prevention in acquiring the disease;

WHEREAS, Dr. Tayag also stated that "usual flu medicines such as the Tamiflu brand are administered to those with swine flu" in the Philippines;

WHEREAS, Tamiflu is prescribed to be taken usually twice a day for a duration of 5 days, and costs Php150.50 per 75mg capsule or Php1,505 per box of 10;

WHEREAS, in order to prepare for the possible pandemic impact of the new swine flu virus in the Philippines, the government must ensure that all the necessary vaccines and medicines to cure the disease are available, accessible and affordable;

WHEREAS, supply and cost of the medicine must be properly monitored by the government to ensure the protection of our people from the possible fatal effect of the new swine flu virus;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Senate direct the Senate Committee on Trade and Commerce and the Senate Committee on Health and Demography to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the pandemic potential of the new strain of swine flu virus that has caused deaths and infections to people in Mexico and the United States to ensure the availability and affordability of necessary vaccines and medicines to patients affected by the virus and for other purposes.

Adopted,


M A R ROXAS
Senator