

**EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE** )  
**REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES** )  
*First Regular Session* )

**SENATE**

**P.S. Res. No. 403**



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**Introduced by SENATOR PIA S. CAYETANO**

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**RESOLUTION**

**URGING THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE RESPONSIVENESS OF THE COUNTRY'S PUBLIC HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE ACCESSIBILITY OF VITAL MEDICAL EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES, WITH THE END GOAL OF IMPROVING THE COUNTRY'S RESPONSIVENESS TO THE CURRENT COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND PREPAREDNESS FOR FUTURE NATIONAL HEALTH EMERGENCIES**

1           **WHEREAS**, the Philippines reported its first confirmed case of COVID-19 on  
2 30 January 2020,<sup>1</sup> and for the past months has already reached 11,350 confirmed  
3 cases as of 12 May 2020;<sup>2</sup>

4           **WHEREAS**, on 16 March 2020, as a response to the increasing confirmed and  
5 suspected cases, President Rodrigo Duterte imposed an Enhanced Community  
6 Quarantine over Luzon from 17 March until 30 April 2020,<sup>3</sup> with the quarantine period  
7 of the National Capital Region along with other areas with high cases extended until  
8 15 May 2020;<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gregorio, X. (2020, January 30). Philippines confirms first case of novel coronavirus. Retrieved from <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/1/30/Philippines-coronavirus-case.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://ncovtracker.doh.gov.ph/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2020/03mar/20200316-MEMORANDUM-FROM-ES-RRD.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Philippine Star. (2020, April 24). ECQ extension in Metro Manila, Calabarzon, other high-risk areas until May 15. Retrieved from <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/04/24/2009340/metro-manila-among-areas-remain-enhanced-quarantine-until-may-15>

1           **WHEREAS**, based on the 2018 Epidemic Preparedness Index<sup>5</sup> and the 2019  
2 Global Health Security Index,<sup>6</sup> the Philippines has an average preparedness in health  
3 emergencies compared to other countries across the world;

4           **WHEREAS**, modeling forecasts show that the number of COVID-19 cases in  
5 the country may peak from 70,000 to 75,000 cases within the next three months;<sup>7</sup>

6           **WHEREAS**, the Enhanced Community Quarantine has bought us time to  
7 prepare our healthcare system to enable the government to improve the  
8 responsiveness of its public health infrastructure and the accessibility of a stable  
9 supply of vital medical equipment and materials as an essential strategy to health  
10 emergency preparedness;

11           **WHEREAS**, 51 quarantine centers have been set up across the country to  
12 augment the capacity of health facilities and to isolate those with mild symptoms of  
13 the virus, and 1,721 COVID-19 referral and accepting hospitals have also been  
14 established to care specifically for COVID-19 patients;<sup>8</sup>

15           **WHEREAS**, despite these supplemental and temporary efforts, recent  
16 estimates show that hospitals in the country fall relatively short from the optimal  
17 42,856 beds,<sup>9</sup> with one hospital bed available for every 1,121 Filipino patients;<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Oppenheim, B. et al. (2019) Assessing global preparedness for the next pandemic: development and application of an Epidemic Preparedness Index. Retrieved from <https://gh.bmj.com/content/4/1/e001157>

<sup>6</sup> Global Health Security Index. (2019). Philippines. Retrieved from <https://www.ghsindex.org/country/philippines/>

<sup>7</sup> Lacuata, R. C. (2020, March 17). COVID-19 cases in the Philippines forecast to reach 75,000 in 3 months, DOH official says. Retrieved from <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/03/18/20/covid-19-cases-in-philippines-forecast-to-reach-75000-in-3-months-doh-official-says>

<sup>8</sup> Retrieved from the 7<sup>th</sup> Report of the President to the Joint Congressional Oversight Committee pursuant to Section 5 of RA 14469, otherwise known as the “Bayanihan to Heal as One Act”

<sup>9</sup> GMA News Affairs. (2019, January 10). Pasyentiis: What Ails the Philippine Health Care System?

<sup>10</sup> Santos, A. (2020, February 18). Philippines 'ill-prepared' as it grapples with coronavirus threat. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/amp/news/2020/02/philippines-ill-prepared-grapples-coronavirus-threat-200218004321154.html>

1           **WHEREAS**, despite having 68% of the country's hospitals beds in Level 2 and  
2 Level 3 hospitals where COVID-19 patients can be treated, the increasing trend in  
3 cases continues to push these facilities in their capacity limits;<sup>11</sup>

4           **WHEREAS**, in terms of access to medical equipment, recent reports show that  
5 there are 1,937 mechanical ventilators for COVID-19 patients,<sup>12</sup> which remains  
6 relatively insufficient given the standing 8,361 active cases in hospitals as of 11 May  
7 2020;<sup>13</sup>

8           **WHEREAS**, in 2019, a World Health Organization study revealed that 4% of  
9 healthcare facilities in the Philippines have no toilets, while 23% utilize unsanitary  
10 toilets, allowing spread of infection among communities;<sup>14</sup>

11           **WHEREAS**, the distribution of health professionals, including doctors, nurses  
12 and medical technologies, are hospital-centric, making the critical primary screening  
13 in disease prevention challenging especially in local health units;<sup>15</sup>

14           **WHEREAS**, the alarming number of COVID-19 cases among health workers  
15 highlights the lack of personal protective equipment (PPE) they need in the  
16 frontlines,<sup>16</sup> with hospitals estimated to use an average of 200 to 500 PPEs per day;<sup>17</sup>

17           **WHEREAS**, with the 'new normal' an impending reality for the country, there  
18 is a high possibility of mandatory wearing of masks and the practice of physical  
19 distancing measures at public places even after the quarantine period, which then  
20 further requires an adequate supply of vital medical equipment and materials to meet  
21 both medical and public consumption needs;

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<sup>11</sup> Tantuco, V. L. (2020, April 18). IN NUMBERS: What hospitals need to treat COVID-19 patients. Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/256133-numbers-what-hospitals-need-treat-coronavirus-patients>

<sup>12</sup> Retrieved from the 7<sup>th</sup> Report of the President to the Joint Congressional Oversight Committee pursuant to Section 5 of RA 14469, otherwise known as the "Bayanihan to Heal as One Act"

<sup>13</sup> <https://ncovtracker.doh.gov.ph/>

<sup>14</sup> 3 out of 10 health care facilities in the Philippines lack access to clean toilets. (2019, April 4). Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/philippines/news/detail/04-04-2019-3-out-of-10-health-care-facilities-in-the-philippines-lack-access-to-clean-toilets>

<sup>15</sup> WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia. (2018). The Philippines health system review. New Delhi.

<sup>16</sup> Cepeda, M. (2020, April 16). Duque admits health workers die in line of duty due to lack of PPEs, dishonest patients. Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/nation/258155-duque-admits-health-workers-die-lack-ppes-dishonest-patients>

<sup>17</sup> Tantuco, V. L. (2020, April 18). IN NUMBERS: What hospitals need to treat COVID-19 patients.

1           **WHEREAS**, these aspects of the country's health system, if remained  
2 unchecked amid the projected trends of this virus, may strain the capacity of the  
3 country to effectively control and prevent the spread of the disease and to significantly  
4 transition to an imminent new state of normalcy;

5           **WHEREAS**, there is a need to review the existing policies and programs on  
6 public health infrastructure and access to vital medical equipment and supplies, with  
7 the end goal of developing initiatives to improve the country's healthcare capacity and  
8 ensuring its self-sufficiency and capacity to produce its own medical equipment and  
9 supplies during the COVID-19 pandemic, and in other potential health emergencies;

10           **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, to urge the appropriate committee  
11 to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the responsiveness of the country's  
12 public health infrastructure and the accessibility of vital medical equipment and  
13 supplies, with the end goal of improving the responsiveness of the country to the  
14 current COVID-19 pandemic and its preparedness for future national health  
15 emergencies.

*Adopted,*

  
**PIA S. CAYETANO**