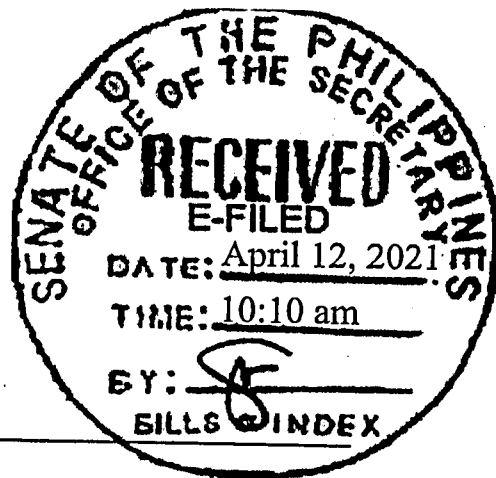


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)

SENATE
P.S. Resolution No. 699



Introduced by **SENATOR IMEE R. MARCOS**

RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION TO IMMEDIATELY REVIEW AND ANALYZE TREATMENTS AND MEDICATIONS, INCLUDING ONGOING CLINICAL TRIALS AND OPTIONAL USE, FOR COVID-19 PATIENTS TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THE INCREASE IN THEIR PRICES AND LACK OF SUPPLY THEREOF

WHEREAS, Article II, Sec. 15 of the 1987 Constitution provides that the State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people. Further, Article XIII, Sec. 11 of the same Constitution provides that, "*The State shall 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 COVID-19 pandemic has taken the world aback. As of 06 April 2021, the Philippines alone has a total of 803,398 cases and 13,435 deaths. According to the OCTA Research, the total of COVID-19 cases in the country may reach more than a million before the end of April due to its rapid increase, with Metro Manila yielding the highest number of cases;

WHEREAS, despite the efforts made by the government to prevent the spread of the virus, the cases continue to increase and the hospital bed and intensive care unit occupancy for COVID-19 patients were above 70 percent for most cities in the NCR Plus bubble which consists of Metro Manila, Bulacan, Rizal, Cavite, and Laguna;

WHEREAS, current clinical management for COVID-19 consists of infection prevention and control measures and supportive care, including supplemental oxygen and mechanical ventilatory support;

WHEREAS, treatment and medications for the prevention and, hopefully, cure for COVID-19 such as Vitamins C, D, and Zinc, Melatonin, Azithromycin, Tocilizumab,

Baricitinib, Remdesivir, including oxygen tanks and concentrators, among others have been significantly increasing in prices and, yet, most are low in supply resulting to shortage;

WHEREAS, issues on prices are also under intense debate as to avoid appearing to take advantage of a health crisis. For instance, in the Philippines, Remdesivir's price costs around Php 20,000 to Php 28,000 per vial which must be administered twice a day for COVID-19 patients. However, in India, generic drugmakers such as Cipla Ltd. and Hetero Labs Ltd. have cheaper prices of Remdesivir at Php 3,212 and Php 3,467 respectively;

WHEREAS, various articles have also mentioned the benefit and use of Ivermectin, an anti-parasitic drug used for animals, which is reportedly used in other countries to reduce the effects and mortality rate for COVID-19 patients which is cheaper than the current medications used since one pill would approximately cost around Php 35. On the other hand, the DOH clarified that while the FDA approved the Chinese medicine "*Lianhua Qingwen*" as a prescriptive drug, the DOH however added that such drug is not registered as a COVID-19 medication;

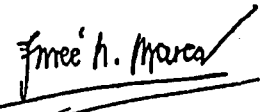
WHEREAS, despite the emergence of the abovementioned medications, most are not approved medications for the treatment of COVID-19 but mostly recommended only and used by other countries abroad for COVID-19, to which even the World Health Organization (WHO) issued cautionary statements for its use;

WHEREAS, given the abovementioned circumstances, the Department of Health (DOH) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) should immediately study and analyze clinical trials and investigations, taking into consideration those conducted in other countries, to pro-actively look into such medications and to provide other cheaper and affordable options for Filipinos which could help cure and treat patients with COVID-19;

WHEREAS, the DOH, in coordination with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), should ensure that medications and equipment used to treat COVID-19 patients are within reasonable price ceilings preventing undue financial burden to Filipinos especially during this time of public health emergency. Both Departments should continuously monitor and evaluate the prices to ensure that such remains affordable and of quality, as well as to keep a close watch for unknown, unverified, or anonymous electronic commerce sites selling restricted medications;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, to urge the Department of Health and the Food and Drug Administration to immediately review and analyze treatments and medications, including ongoing clinical trials and optional use, for COVID-19 patients taking into consideration the increase in their prices and lack of supply thereof.

Adopted,


IMEE R. MARCOS