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SENATE

P. S. RES. No. 536

Introduced by Senators **PIA S. CAYETANO** and **JOEL VILLANUEVA**

RESOLUTION

URGING THE COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS, INNOVATION, AND FUTURES THINKING TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE STATUS OF HUMAN RESOURCES FOR HEALTH (HRH) IN THE PHILIPPINES

1 **WHEREAS**, the 1987 Constitution provides that the State shall undertake
2 appropriate health manpower development and research, responsive to the
3 Philippines' health-related needs and problems;¹

4 **WHEREAS**, the Philippines as a party to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable
5 Development remains committed to the achievement of the Sustainable Development
6 Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 3 on good health and well-being through, among
7 others, increasing the recruitment, development, training, and retention of the health
8 workforce in developing countries; SDG 8 which calls for sustained, inclusive and
9 sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for
10 all; and SDG 17 which promotes global and public-private sector partnerships for the
11 attainment of the SDGs;

12 **WHEREAS**, based on a 2022 International Labour Organization study, since
13 the 1970s, the Philippines has been experiencing a brain drain phenomenon with the
14 migration of highly skilled physicians and this continued in the 1980s with the exodus
15 of mid-level professionals such as nurses, medical technicians, and paramedics;²

¹ Article XIII, Section 12, 1987 Constitution.

² Albuero, F. A., & Abella, D. I. (2002, March 25). Skilled labour migration from developing countries: Study on the Philippines. *International Labour Organization*.
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/publication/wcms_201780.pdf

1 **WHEREAS**, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration and the
2 Commission on Filipino Overseas have been monitoring the international migration of
3 Filipino health workers since 1990, and the data has shown a steady increase from
4 1990 to 2017 at an average of 19% of migrants per year, or a total of 350,351 doctors,
5 nurses, and midwives have left the country because of the better social, economic,
6 and professional opportunities abroad;³

7 **WHEREAS**, Section 23 of *Republic Act No. 11223 or the Universal Health Care*
8 (*UHC Act*) mandates that the Department of Health (DOH), together with other
9 stakeholders, shall ensure the formulation and implementation of a National Health
10 Human Resource Master Plan that will provide policies and strategies for the
11 appropriate generation, recruitment, retraining, regulation, retention and
12 reassessment of health workforce based on population health needs and to ensure
13 continuity in the provision of the health programs and services, all health professionals
14 and health care workers shall be guaranteed permanent employment and competitive
15 salaries;

16 **WHEREAS**, Section 25 of the UHC Act directs the Commission on Higher
17 Education, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Professional
18 Regulation Commission, and the DOH to develop and plan the expansion of existing
19 and new allied and health-related degree and training programs including those for
20 community-based health care workers and regulate the number of enrollees in each
21 program based on the health needs of the population especially those in underserved
22 areas;

23 **WHEREAS**, to implement the foregoing provisions of the UHC Act, the DOH
24 published the Human Resource for Health Philippine Master Plan (HRH Master Plan)
25 2020-2040, which serves as the blueprint that defines the current situation of HRH in
26 the country and the strategies that will address the issues that impact on the
27 performance of the HRH and the health sector, the governance and accountability
28 mechanism among the HRH stakeholders, the monitoring and evaluation mechanism
29 that will track the progress of its implementation, and the communication plan to guide

³ Human Resources for Health 2030. (2020). *Policy brief: Human resources for health migration*.
https://hrh2030program.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/x12.8_HRH2030PH_Migration-policy-brief.pdf

1 its dissemination;⁴

2 **WHEREAS**, even after years of implementing the UHC Act, the DOH said that
3 as of 30 September 2022, the Philippines has a shortage of 194,114 health care
4 workers for public and private hospitals and the breakdown is as follows:⁵

- 5 – 67,345 Physicians;
- 6 – 106,541 Nurses;
- 7 – 6,651 Pharmacists;
- 8 – 5,502 X-ray Radiologic Technicians;
- 9 – 4,416 Medical Technologists;
- 10 – 1,680 Nutritionist-Dietitians;
- 11 – 884 Occupational Therapists;
- 12 – 785 Midwives;
- 13 – 223 Physical Therapists; and
- 14 – 87 Dentists;

15 **WHEREAS**, despite the shortage of health professionals, the Philippines
16 continues to be a major exporter of such human resources;⁶

17 **WHEREAS**, in 2019 alone, at least 17,000 Filipino nurses signed overseas
18 contracts⁷ and according to the DOH, 51% or 316,000 licensed nurses in the country
19 have already migrated;⁸

20 **WHEREAS**, in 2020, according to the Philippine Nurses Association, 60% of
21 the 500,000 Filipino registered nurses work in other countries, and 4% of the
22 registered nurses in the United States are Filipinos, according to National Nurses

⁴ Department of Health. (2020, June 30). *Human resources for health Philippine masterplan 2020-2040*. https://hrh2030program.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/x12.1_HRH2030PH_HRHMmasterplan-Full.pdf

⁵ Bosano, R. (2022, Sept 30). Philippines short of almost 200,000 health workers, says DOH. *ABS-CBN*. <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/09/30/22/philippines-short-of-almost-200000-health-workers-doh>

⁶ Romualdez Jr, A. G., de la Rosa, J. F. E., Flavier, J. D. A., Quimbo, S. L. A., Hartigan-Go, K. Y., Lagrada, L. P., & David, L. C. (2011). The Philippines health system review. *Health Systems in Transition*. Vol.1 No.2. Manila: World Health Organization, Regional Office for the Western Pacific.

⁷ Reuters. (2021, June 18). Philippines raised cap on health professionals going abroad. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/philippines-raises-cap-health-professionals-going-abroad-2021-06-18/>

⁸ Mercado, N. (2022, August 12). Proposed ladderized program for nurses gets Bongbong Marcos' backing. *Philippine Inquirer*. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1645310/proposed-ladderized-program-for-nurses-gets-bongbong-marcos-backing#ixzz7bhcdEDNO>

1 United;⁹

2 **WHEREAS**, based on news reports, European countries are working with
3 Philippine schools¹⁰ in efforts to recruit Filipino nursing students to continue their
4 education and careers abroad by providing them with scholarships and free lodging in
5 return for working in the host country after graduation;¹¹

6 **WHEREAS**, improving the health service coverage and realizing the right to
7 the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health of the Filipino people is
8 dependent on the availability, accessibility, acceptability, and quality of our health
9 human resources;¹²

10 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, to urge the Committee on
11 Sustainable Development Goals, Innovation, and Futures Thinking to conduct an
12 inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the status of the HRH in the Philippines.

Adopted,


PIA S. CAYETANO


JOEL VILLANUEVA

⁹ Econar, F. (2021, October 8). For generations, Filipino nurses have been on America's front lines. *CNN*. <https://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2021/10/health/filipino-nurses-cnnphotos/>

¹⁰ Requejo, R. (2023, January 17). Envoy denies report Germany, UK 'pirating' Filipino nursing students. *Manila Standard*. <https://manilastandard.net/news/national/314297203/envoy-denies-report-germany-uk-pirating-filipino-nursing-students.html>

¹¹ Jaymalin, M. (2023, January 17). Foreign countries 'pirating' Filipino nursing students. *The Philippine Star*. <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2023/01/17/2238118/foreign-countries-pirating-filipino-nursing-students>

¹² World Health Organization. (2020, July 7). *Global strategy on human resources for health: Workforce 2030*. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241511131>