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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND DEMOGRAPHY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE EXODUS OF FILIPINO HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS FOR BETTER PAY AND WORKING CONDITIONS ABROAD

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article II, Section 15 states that: "The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them",

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article XIII, Section 12 also states that: "The State shall establish and maintain an effective food and drug regulatory system and undertake appropriate health, manpower development, and research, responsive to the country's health needs and problems";

WHEREAS, the Alliance of Health Workers (AHW) predicts the collapse of the Philippine health care system within the next two to three years due to dismal working conditions that drive local doctors and nurses overseas;

WHEREAS, AHW secretary general Jossel Ebesate said that the country loses around 13,000 nurses every year; from 2000 to 2003 alone, a total of 51,850 nurses left the country to work abroad;

WHEREAS, in 2004, some 5,000 doctors joined the bandwagon to work as nurses; at present, some 80 percent of government doctors are enrolled in nursing schools nationwide;

WHEREAS, the Health Alliance for Democracy (HEAD) reported the alarming ratio in the country of one doctor for every 10,000 to 26,000 patients; this ratio is a far cry from the United States and Cuba where there is one doctor for every 225 patients,

WHEREAS, according to Dr. Gene Nisperos, HEAD secretary-general, the country started losing doctors in the 1960s when doctors and nurses left for higher studies and training overseas; by the mid-1970s, the Philippines was already the second top exporter of doctors and nurses in the world, next only to India; the problem worsened in the late 1990s when the United Stated and several European countries increased their demand for doctors and nurses;

WHEREAS, a number of district hospitals in the country have already been forced to shut down because of the unabated exodus of Filipino doctors and nurses; some district hospitals have resorted to "outsourcing" or hiring private doctors to work for them in order to avoid closure; WHEREAS, it is the duty of the government to take appropriate measures to address this crisis in the health sector and to prevent the impending scarcity of health care professionals in the country;

WHEREFORE, be it resolved, as it is hereby resolved by the Philippine Senate, to direct the Senate Committee on Health and Demography to conduct an inquiry in aid of legislation on the exodus of health care professionals for better pay and working conditions abroad.

Adopted,

Unin Lunar Antici MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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