

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Third Regular Session)

THE SECRETARY

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SENATE
P.S.R. No. 524

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION
DIRECTING AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION,
ON THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION REPORT
THAT HALF OF THE FILIPINO POPULATION
HAVE NO ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, 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 13, Section 11, also states 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. There shall be priority for the needs of the under-privileged, sick, elderly, disabled, women, and children. The State shall endeavor to provide free medical care to paupers”;

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 13, Section 12, further provides 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, according to the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, in its 20 April 2006 issue, a recent World Health Organization (WHO) Report showed that despite government efforts, only half of the entire Philippine population of more than 84 million have access to health care;

WHEREAS, WHO regional adviser Dr. Ezekiel Nukuro cited the exodus of skilled Filipino health workers and professionals over the past few years as the reason behind this health crisis; according to him, the lack of health workers puts the Philippine health care services on the verge of collapse;

WHEREAS, the WHO attributed “decades of cost-cutting and under-investment in health” to the diaspora of Filipino health workers;

WHEREAS, according to WHO officials, at least 15,000 nurses and other medical professionals leave the country each year for better-paying jobs abroad;

WHEREAS, in the last ten years, close to 90,000 nurses left the Philippines for overseas jobs; in the last four years alone, 3,500 doctors left the country to take on nursing posts abroad;

WHEREAS, Health Secretary Francisco Duque acknowledged the gravity of this crisis, pointing out that an estimated 85 percent of our nurses have left the country;

WHEREAS, in 2004 alone, 10,350 Filipino nurses took the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX), a test that nurses must pass to get a license to practice in the United States; this makes the Philippines the top country of origin of internationally educated nurses taking the licensure test;

WHEREAS, according to the United States Department of Health and Human Services, in its 2004 National Sample Survey of Registered Nurses, around 50,600, or more than half of the total number of foreign-educated registered nurses in the United States, came from the Philippines;

WHEREAS, this latest development is a manifestation of the languishing situation of our country's health sector due to the lack of health workers and misguided government priorities;

WHEREAS, the government must expediently find ways to strengthen its health care system while providing solutions for the exodus of our health workers, for the lives of millions of Filipinos are at stake if the crisis in our country's health infrastructure would not be averted or remedied; now be it

RESOLVED, that the proper Senate committee shall conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the World Health Organization Report that half of the Filipino population have no access to health care.


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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