



Risa Hontiveros
Senator

AKBAYAN CITIZENS' ACTION PARTY

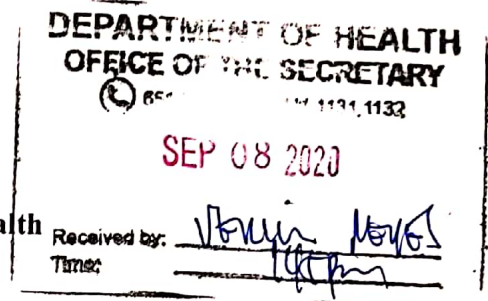
06 September 2020

**INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE ON
EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES (IATF)**
San Lazaro Compound, Tayuman, Sta. Cruz, Manila

ATTN: SEC. FRANCISCO T. DUQUE III
Department Secretary, Department of Health
Chairperson, IATF

SEC. KARLO NOGRALES
Co-Chair, IATF

RE: Overseas Deployment of Medical & Allied Health Workers



Dear **Sec. Duque**:

I am writing to urge the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-MEID) to reconsider the ban on the overseas deployment of medical and allied health workers pursuant to IATF-MEID Resolution No. 64. This request is being made on behalf of various labor groups and nurses organizations who recently brought the aforementioned issue to my attention.

While I understand that our country's health care system should be prioritized *vis-à-vis* the allocation of scarce human resources during this difficult period, I also understand the disappointment and frustration of health workers barred from leaving the Philippines after entering into contracts for overseas employment and securing the permits necessary therefor. I believe their deployment abroad will not only provide economic relief for their families, their remittances will also aid in the revival of the domestic economy.

Currently, thousands of healthcare workers awaiting deployment stand to be affected by IATF-MEID Resolution No. 64. Should they be barred from leaving the country, these workers not only face the legal repercussions of being unable to comply with the terms of



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their employment contracts, they also risk substantial financial loss from being unable to recoup the expenses necessary to apply for work abroad.

It must be emphasized that the Bayanihan to Recover as One Act ratified by Congress in August 24, 2020, which I supported, allocated PhP13.5B for the following health-related measures: continuous employment of existing Human Resources for Health (HRH); the hiring of additional emergency HRH; and the provision of additional benefits for all health care workers. However, concurrent to the implementation of this Act, I believe we should also allow health care workers who have already secured employment abroad to deploy.

I likewise believe that with the proper implementation of this Act, future health care workers and professionals will be incentivized to work in the Philippines rather than abroad, thus negating the need for such a ban or prohibition. Consequently, on behalf of affected health care workers, I would like to respectfully reiterate their request that the ban on their overseas deployment be lifted.

I am praying for the favorable response of the IATF on this matter. Thank you and best regards.

Sincerely yours,

Risa Hontiveros
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Senator