



Republic of the Philippines

Senate

OFFICE OF SENATOR RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.

I have the honor to present comments and recommendations to the Seventh Report of the President to the Joint Congressional Oversight Committee pursuant to Section 5 of Republic Act 11469, otherwise known as the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act.

Allow me to recognize the collective efforts of the Executive Department and all of its agencies and instrumentalities in responding to the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic and in addressing the pressing needs of our countrymen in these extraordinary times.

May these inputs be of help to the concerned agencies in pursuing a more effective and efficient implementation of RA 11469 in relation to the Covid-19 crisis.

Thank you and more power.

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Update on Social Amelioration Programs (SAP)

1. Based on the latest report, there is no movement in the number of beneficiaries served in the TNVS-PUV sector in NCR. To wit, 40,418 beneficiaries have been served (out of 90,000 estimated beneficiaries) and was reported both in the 5th, 6th and 7th Bayanihan Reports. May we know an update about the emergency assistance being extended to this sector? Is the project discontinued? What are the challenges which prevent the speedy distribution of such assistance to TNVS-PUV? (Pages 1-2)
2. Earlier, Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) identified 435,619 drivers of public utility vehicles (PUVs) who will receive financial support under the SAP.¹ 380,508 of which are drivers of four-wheeled PUVs—such as jeepneys, UV Express, buses, among others, while 55,111 are drivers of motorcycle taxis. However, during the May 11 public hearing of the Senate Committee on Public Services, LTFRB admitted that the distribution of such aid under this program was “slow” and said that many of the target beneficiaries have yet to receive the subsidy.² What is the update on this? What are being done to address the delay?
3. DILG directed all Punong Barangays to post the masterlist of beneficiaries of the Social Amelioration Program³ in the spirit of transparency. What is the compliance rate of LGUs in ensuring transparency in the implementation of the SAP?

¹ <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1099164>

² <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/737753/distribution-of-aid-to-400-000-puv-drivers-across-country-slow-ltfrb-chair/story/>

³ <https://www.dilg.gov.ph/news/DILG-to-Punong-Barangays-Post-list-of-SAP-beneficiaries-in-barangay-hall-for-transparency/NC-2020-1100>

4. There have been reports of individuals who are seeking financial assistance being asked by the barangay officials to seek help from the city or municipal hall. Officials from the municipal or city hall, however, direct them back to their respective barangay officials. Up to the last stretch of the implementation of SAP for poor households, there had been confusion on the issue of accountability.
5. On the assistance of the Department of Agriculture for marginalized small farmers and fisherfolk, a small number of beneficiaries has been reported (2,248 out of 40,000⁴ estimated beneficiaries). How can the DA speed up the disbursements of loans under such program? It is highly recommended that they relax some of the requirements to accommodate the urgent needs of the small farmers and fisherfolk. (Page 6)

Mobility assistance to healthcare workers, frontliners and other individuals

1. We reiterate our appeal to the local government units to assist cancer and kidney patients, especially those who live in the provinces and need to go to Manila to avail treatment, through provision of free shuttle service.

As stated previously, we have been receiving reports that some cancer patients have to walk for hours just to bring themselves to hospitals for their treatment sessions. Some patients have redeveloped cancer cells because they missed chemotherapy sessions. Some immunocompromised patients refused to go to treatment centers for fear of contracting Covid-19.

I encourage the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) to come up with new guidelines to ensure that cancer and dialysis patients as well as distributors of cancer drugs can easily pass through checkpoints. I am also calling on the treatment centers to follow and be guided by DOH Memorandum Circular 2020-0162 mandating the continuous operation of dialysis facilities throughout the Philippines during the Enhanced Community Quarantine.

2. Considering that some areas have already been placed under General Community Quarantine (GCQ) since May 1 where public transportation have been allowed to operate at a reduced capacity, how do local governments monitor the compliance of the PUVs to the minimum health standards set by the national government? What is the compliance rate of the public transport sector?
3. Are there subsidies or financial assistance in place for drivers and operators of PUVs who have been severely affected by the implementation of reduced capacity for public transport in GCQ areas? What are these measures?

Secure facilities and resources for the health sector and other frontliners

1. Given the figures on the number of testing kits, accredited laboratories, procured protective equipment, converted quarantine facilities among others, how does the DOH appreciate all

⁴ Based on 6th Report dated May 4, 2020

these data in relation to their set targets, strategies and overall objectives? What is the gap between the existing assets against the ideal and target inventory? How far are we in achieving these targets? How soon can these resources be gathered? How much funding is required to fully support our health care systems?

2. On the Human Resources for Health, what is the timeline in the *emergency* hiring and filling up of 3,042 slots as requested for 56 health facilities, hospitals and quarantine centers? (Page 9)
3. Is there a plan to beef up manpower of our national and subnational laboratories to hasten the release of results of the Covid-19 tests? What are the efforts being done to augment and train more laboratory personnel which could expand the capacities of our accredited laboratories and complement the accreditation of more laboratories?
4. The Bayanihan Act provides compensation to private and public health workers who may contract severe Covid-19 infection while in the line of duty, and who may die while fighting the pandemic. As per previous communication, the budget proposal was put on hold pending the release of guidelines and mechanisms from the DOH. As of May 12, there were 35 health workers who died due to Covid-19, while 2,067 health workers contracted the disease.⁵ May we know the status of implementation of this particular provision of the Bayanihan Act?
5. Given that some areas have been placed under General Community Quarantine since May 1 where several businesses have been reopened and public transportation had been allowed to operate at reduced capacity, were there reported cases or incidences of resurgence of Covid-19 infection and transmission? There should be continued surveillance on the Covid-19 cases on GCQ areas as well as areas which will not be placed on community quarantine.

⁵ <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/05/12/20/1-new-death-recorded-as-doctors-nurses-other-health-workers-with-covid-19-reach-2067>