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SENATE  
P.S.R. No. 240

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION  
DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID  
OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED MERCURY SPILL AT THE FABELLA  
MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 15 states: "The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them";

WHEREAS, in *Philippine Daily Inquirer* online dated 10 August 2013, in an article entitled "Mercury Spill at Manila's Fabella hospital", reported that the Department of Health on Saturday ordered a clean-up of a "chemical spill" at a government-run maternity hospital known as a "baby factory" due to the immensely large number of women from the lower income brackets who go there to give birth;

WHEREAS, Health Assistant Secretary Eric Tayag said a clean-up was under way at the Fabella Memorial Hospital in Sta. Cruz, Manila after an initial assessment showed unacceptable mercury levels in several areas "in and around the storage room";

WHEREAS, it was reported that Health Secretary Enrique Ona had directed the Fabella Memorial Hospital officials and staff to prioritize patient safety after mercury reportedly spilled from a broken container in the storage room on August 8;

WHEREAS, it was reported that it was unclear why a maternity hospital, known as a "baby factory" for having the biggest number of births in any Philippine hospital every year, would have in storage a large amount of mercury dental amalgam whose use for dental filling has been largely discontinued;

WHEREAS, according to the news article, the Fabella Memorial Hospital was one of health facilities that had discontinued the use of mercury-containing medical devices after the DOH ordered their phase-out in 2008, and that all health facilities were ordered to comply with the mercury ban by 2010;

WHEREAS, it was reported that DOH was still trying to determine how the spill happened;

WHEREAS, according to the report, Asst. Sec. Tayag said the mercury was still in the storage room because its disposal needed the supervision of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR);

WHEREAS, the report said it was not clear why, if it had already been notified, the DENR has so far not done anything about its disposal;

WHEREAS, the news reported said that the DOH was examining possibly exposed individuals following the mercury spill, and will monitor them for possible health effects of the spill;

WHEREAS, when inhaled, mercury vapor goes to the brain and affects the central nervous system, and that high exposures can cause respiratory difficulty and even death;

WHEREAS, Congress should ensure that government hospitals maintain high standards and expectations as state-run facilities, in consonance with the Constitutional mandate to protect and promote the right to health of the Filipino people;

WHEREFORE, be it hereby resolved by the Philippine Senate to direct the proper Senate committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the reported mercury spill at the Fabella Memorial Hospital.

Adopted,

*ccr.*   
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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