

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
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Senate
Office of the Secretary

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SENATE
P. S. R. No. 750

RECEIVED BY: *JW*

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY,
IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED IMPROPER HUMAN WASTE DISPOSAL
CAUSING WATER CONTAMINATION RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CHOLERA OUTBREAK
IN NORTH COTABATO

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

WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 9275, also known as the Clean Water Act of 2004, Article 1, Section 2 states that, "The State shall pursue a policy of economic growth in a manner consistent with the protection, preservation and revival of the quality of our fresh, brackish and marine waters. To achieve this end, the framework for sustainable development shall be pursued. As such, it shall be the policy of the State... To formulate a holistic national program of water quality management that recognizes that water quality management issues cannot be separated from concerns about water sources and ecological protection, water supply, public health and quality of life";

WHEREAS, a *Philippine Star* article entitled "Open defecation eyed in N. Cotabato cholera cases" published last 20 May 2014, reported that health authorities are eyeing open defecation as the possible cause of the increase in cholera cases in five barangays in Alamada, North Cotabato this month;

WHEREAS, citing reports of a team of disease and environmental sanitation experts sent by the Department of Health (DOH) to the town of Alamada, Department of Health (DOH) spokesman Lyndon Lee Suy reportedly said that people in the area still practice open defecation, which could have contaminated their water supply;

WHEREAS, it was reportedly found that the residents' primary sources of water were a stream and deep wells;

WHEREAS, Suy allegedly said that an increase in the cases of acute watery diarrhea was recorded starting May 12 in the villages of Dado, Lower Dado, Pigkawaran, Rangayen and Barangiran;

WHEREAS, he also reportedly said that although these areas do not have a history of cholera, it is possible that an infected person defecated in the open and contaminated the water;

WHEREAS, it was alleged that the DOH had documented 1,083 cases of acute watery diarrhea, although not all of them have been confirmed to be cholera;

WHEREAS, the report claimed that rectal swabs were collected from 44 individuals and four of them have tested positive for cholera;

WHEREAS, Suy also reportedly said that there are actually more cases of amoebiasis than cholera, but they are working on the premise that it is cholera, because tests done to determine cholera can also determine amoebiasis;

WHEREAS, it was reported that of the 1,083 cases, eight deaths were recorded, five of them children below eight years old;

WHEREAS, according to Suy, the DOH is still validating the real cause of deaths, but chances are that these deaths are associated with cholera rather than amoebiasis, because dehydration is more severe in cholera cases;

WHEREAS, the health official reportedly refused to say that the increase in cases constituted an outbreak, noting medically that they do not yet warrant the declaration of an outbreak at this point;

WHEREAS, Suy allegedly said that they hope to see cases going down in the next few weeks as contingency measures are being implemented in the communities;

WHEREAS, it was reported that the DOH team has been assisting their local counterparts in the diagnosis and management of cases, and has oral rehydration solution and supplied the residents with water;

WHEREAS, according to Suy, if the residents do not want to avail of the supplies, they should boil their drinking water and observe personal hygiene and sanitation, especially hand washing;

WHEREAS, there is a need to implement proper human waste disposal in these areas where water sources are prone to contamination to prevent rapid transmission of diseases;

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 improper human waste disposal causing water contamination responsible for the cholera outbreak in North Cotabato.

Adopted,

Miriam Defensor Santiago
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO
ad.

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