

FOURTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)  
OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
Second Regular Session )

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SENATE  
P. S. R. No. 547

RECEIVED BY: 

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN  
INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE RECURRING REPORTS OF  
GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS ALLEGEDLY KEEPING MILLIONS OF PESOS  
WORTH OF SURPLUS AND EXPIRED MEDICINES

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 1 August 2008 issue of the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* reported that the Commission on Audit (COA) found that government hospitals are keeping P8 million worth of surplus and expired medicines, some of which were purchased under the "GMA 50" program;

WHEREAS, the GMA 50 Program was reportedly launched in July 2001 when President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo made a commitment to lower the prices by 50% of drugs and medicines frequently bought by the poor;

WHEREAS, some of the government hospitals mentioned in the COA report that were found to house excessive and unnecessary and/or expired or about to expire medicines are: Metro Manila's Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (P750,313), Rizal Medical Center (P336,000), Caraga Regional Hospital (P106,348), Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital and Medical Center (P3.5 million), Caraga's Batanes Regional Hospital (P122,739.58), Southern Isabela General Hospital (P39,093.80), the Zamboanga Peninsula's Central Health Department (P25,960.01), and Paulino J. Garcia Memorial Research and Medical Center (P109,012.94);

WHEREAS, the COA also reportedly discovered that medicines the Department of Budget and Management's (DBM) Procurement Service purchased for Central Visayas using the pork barrel of an unidentified former senator were overpriced by P15.46 million;

WHEREAS, the news report said that the COA's 2007 audit report revealed that the DBM purchased two years ago 14,650 boxes of multivitamins at P1,199.12 each or a total of P17.46 million for Central Visayas, and it was noted that the price was eight times higher than of those procured by the Department of Health (DOH) from the same manufacturer and distributor, PITC Pharma, Inc.;

WHEREAS, the COA report allegedly blamed the prevalence of overstocking and expiring medicines in eight state-owned hospitals across the country to the DOH's inadequate planning of purchase, disorganized schemes of issuance and the poor monitoring of the shelf life of drugs;

WHEREAS, the COA report allegedly stated that "The DOH failed to properly coordinate with the recipients of donated medicines such that excessive and unnecessary donations resulted in overstocking and expiration of these medicines";

WHEREAS, the news reported that the drugs, labeled "slow-moving" medicines, were no longer prescribed by some physicians and that the DOH delivered more than what the hospital needed in a given period;

WHEREAS, although the COA advised the DOH to observe the three-month volume requirement in the purchase of medicines and observe the first-in, first-out method in the issuance of drugs, and that it also directed the DOH to continue promoting the availability of the "GMA 50" drugs and require hospital doctors to prescribe these drugs "to ensure the success of the GMA program", legislation must ensure that the system of procurement, storage, and delivery of these medicines will be cost-effective, efficient, and transparent since this recurring incident appears to be a failure in the existing system;

WHEREFORE, be it resolved, as it is hereby resolved by the Philippine Senate, to direct the proper Senate committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the recurring reports of government hospitals allegedly keeping millions of pesos worth of surplus and expired medicines.

Adopted,

  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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