



PHILIPPINE NURSES ASSOCIATION, INC.

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Press Release

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Nurses: We Need Equitable Healthcare for All, Jobs, P25,000 Starting Salary

Nurses under the Philippine Nurses Association, nursing specialty and interest organizations, launched today the Red Cap Movement to bring to the attention of our law makers, policymakers, and the public, the worsening healthcare to our people. Data from the DOH itself showed that out of more than 42,000 barangays, barely 12,000 have fully equipped and fully-staffed Barangay Health Stations. Our 1,490 municipalities and 122 cities, are only served by 1,200 main health centers, about a third of which have no permanent rural health physicians. In our remaining public hospitals, nurses are handling patients three to four times higher than the DOH prescribed nurse to patient ratio. Yet, in spite of the chronic understaffing in public hospitals and public health institutions, hundreds of thousands of registered nurses are without jobs. Those who are lucky to be employed as nurses in government health institutions receive starting salaries below the mandated P25,000 starting salary (Salary Grade 15). Wages for nurses are even much lower in the private sector.

Using the tagline: “Dignity for the Nurses, Service to the People!”, the nurses are wearing red cap to dramatize the urgency and determination of their appeal on our government to give priority to the health care for our people, immediately allay the shortage of regular (plantilla) nurses and other health workers to our public hospitals and public health institutions; and, fully provide for their duly mandated salaries and benefits.

A cursory look of the DOH data on nurses showed that there are 18,000 nurses employed by the government in 2005 and 9,000 in the private sector. But by the end of 2014, it dubiously ballooned to 42,000 employed nurses (21,000 public and 21,000 private) without an increase in the number of plantilla items in the government and main health centers (where nurses are usually deployed) or any substantial increase in bed capacities of our hospital system. Meanwhile, it is already a fact that there are about 200,000 registered nurses without jobs; and, 300,000 that are de-skilled because they are forced to accept non-nursing jobs in order to provide support for their families. Such grim scenario of nurses employment showed an absence of health human resource planning and an apparent fudging of data on the part of the government.

The group plans to hold a series of year-round activities that may result to: an increase in the allocation of national budget for health in order for the country to have a more equitable and climate change-responsive healthcare for all; enactment of a more responsive Nursing Law; create more job opportunities for nurses; and safe staffing ratio and other occupational health and safety issues in the workplace. ###