PAMBANSANG SAMAHAN NG MGA NARS NG PILIPINAS, INC.
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THE PHILIPPINE NURSES ASSOCIATION'S POSITION PAPER ON THE HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 24
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The Philippine Nurses Association affirms its responsibility to protect the rights and general welfare of the Filipino nurses as the largest workforce in the health sector. Nurses as public health servants, whether in public or private institutions, are entitled to a decent work environment as they continue to render health services to their clients.

Considering that Philippines is producing an average of 60,000 registered nurses every year, the problem of unemployment and underemployment among nurses continue to prevail. Some of these nurses become vulnerable victims of unfair labor practices in order to augment their basic daily survival needs. Others become "willing volunteers" in health institutions performing regular functions of a nurse without pay.

The Philippine Nurses Association reiterates its position that Republic Act 9173, otherwise known as the Nursing Law of 2002 be implemented, specifically Section 32 that pegs the minimum base pay of nurses in public health institutions at Salary Grade 15 (from the present Salary Grade 10). No less than President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in whose term the Nursing Law was enacted has declared it "the policy of the State to assume responsibility for the protection and improvement of the nursing profession by instituting measures that will result in relevant nursing education, humane working conditions, better career prospects and a dignified existence for our nurses."

The hallmark legislation (RA 9173) mirrors the deep sentiments, aspirations and ideals of the Filipino nurses. It was borne of hard labor and unceasing efforts of eminent nursing leaders, past and present, with the support of the nursing masses to accord our profession the dignity it deserves with just compensation and decent work-life conditions.

The provision on salary increase is specially crucial given that the present average pay of nurses in tertiary government hospitals at basic pay of 12,026 under Salary Grade 10 is way below the P27,100 monthly or P911.00 daily living allowance for a family of 5 (Source: National Wages and Productivity Commission).

Here or abroad, Filipino nurses make a significant contribution to the country's development. Being the largest member of the country's health human resource, nurses deserve decent treatment, at the least, fair wages and better work conditions. These are the basic provisions contained in the Nursing Law of 2002 (RA 9173) that up till now remain in the dustbin of government's priorities.

Given the above situation, the Philippine Nurses Association (PNA) strongly disagree that the Nursing Law of 2002 (RA 9173), as well as the Magna Carta of Public Health Workers (RA 7305) be superseded by the "Joint Resolution No. 24" crafted by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

This Joint Resolution No. 24 cannot just render invalid a law of the land like the Nursing Law that has been the product of long, judicious, wisdom-laden, evidence-based process of formulation by eminent leaders of the profession. The government is bound by its legal and moral mandate to ensure that the Nursing Law and the Magna Carta of Public Health Workers, as laws of the land, to be respected and implemented. The nurses and the nursing profession have suffered and wallowed long enough under deplorable work conditions that have likewise bore down on the quality of nursing care.

We demand that the government fulfill its legal and moral mandate and immediately implement the Nursing Law and the Magna Carta of Public Health Workers. It has reneged on its responsibility and obligation for too long now. To continue doing so would already constitute a willful violation of the law and a breach in its covenant with the people.

We join the rest of the workers in government service and our fellow health workers in the public sector in the call for decent salary increases and better work conditions. Specifically, we call on the members of Congress to listen to our plea that the Nursing Law be recognized and respected and its provisions be implemented immediately.

IMPLEMENT NURSING LAW NOW! INCREASE NURSES' SALARY NOW!

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