



PAMBANSANG SAMAHAN NG MGA NARS NG PILIPINAS, INC.
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PNA PRESS RELEASE

NEW ZEALAND REMAINS OPEN TO FILIPINO NURSES

Filipino nurses are very much welcome to work in New Zealand, contrary to earlier reports circulating in the press and broadcast media. This was the assurance given by visiting executives of the Nursing Council of New Zealand to the Department of Foreign Affairs, even as New Zealand continues to adopt measures to facilitate the continued entry of competent foreign nurses into the country.

The assurance was given by Chief Executive Ms. Carolyn Reed and Registration Manager Ms. Andrea McCance both of the Nursing Council of New Zealand, during their call on Dr. Teresita Barcelo, President of the Philippine Nurses Association (PNA) and Dean Carmelita Divinagracia, President of the Association of Deans of Philippine Colleges of Nursing (ADPCN). The DFA was represented by ASPAC Director J. Susana Paez and OUIER Director Eric Gerardo Tamayo.

The council executives visited the Philippines upon the suggestion of Philippine Ambassador to New Zealand Bienvenido Tejano, and in their hope of undertaking consultations with their counterparts in the Philippines. The Executives held separate meetings with officials of the Professional Regulatory Commission (PRC) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED).

Ms. McCance further informed that rather than discriminating against foreign nurses, the Nursing Council has been making it less complicated for qualified foreign nurses to come to New Zealand. Steps they have taken include providing complete information in its website, and staggering the completion requirement of completing seven (7) bands under the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) which includes the option of taking the IELTS in the country of origin. The Council officials cite a very low failure rate in the required competency assessment program, and observed that Filipino nurse candidates are able to successfully hurdle the prescribed bridging program.

Ms. Reed informed that Filipinos comprise the second largest number of foreign nurses. About 200 Filipino nurses are registered in New Zealand every year. Most of those who are registered find work in homes for elder care – some in remote areas. The Council, the PNA and the DFA noted the difficult cultural adjustment process in such a situation and the need to ensure the welfare of Filipino nurses.

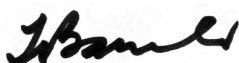
Ms. Reed expressed regret at the nuisance and confusion brought about earlier by erroneous media reporting on disparaging statements questioning the competence of Filipino nurses. Such remarks were made by other parties who are not connected with the New Zealand Nursing Council or the New Zealand Government.

Ms Reed and Ms. McCance clarified that the issuance of residency visas is beyond the scope of their work, but a foreign nurse registered with them presents such registration in support of a separate proper residency status application with New Zealand immigration authorities. The Nursing Council encourages direct applications rather than coursing registration via recruitment agencies.

The visiting executives were briefed by Dr. Barcelo on the role of the PNA, while Dean Divinagracia presented the Philippines' BSN curriculum and the educational standards for registered nurses in the Philippines. Ms. Reed expressed her appreciation that the meeting facilitated their understanding of the Philippine nursing program for purposes of matching course requirements.

The DFA encouraged the Nursing Council, PNA and ADPCN to pursue and adopt a practice done with other countries, of having school registrars identify and match subjects with foreign government requirements on the applicant's transcript of records. This would also facilitate the evaluation of those pursuing nursing as a second degree. This measure would also help the Council ensure that nurses registering in New Zealand are indeed International Qualified Nurses (IQN) suitable for the country's healthcare standards.

The meeting's outcome assures an open line of communication between the Council and the nurses sector in the Philippines, and augurs well for better opportunities for Filipino nurses and the adoption of relevant programs to further uplift the nursing profession in the country.
END



TERESITA IRIGO-BARCELO, PhD, RN
National President
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