



PAMBANSANG SAMAHAN NG MGA NARS NG PILIPINAS, INC.
(PHILIPPINE NURSES ASSOCIATION, INC.)
Member, INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES

1663 F.T. Benitez St.
Malate, Manila 1004
Philippines

Telephone: 5210937 / 4004430
Telefax: 5251596
E-mail Address: philippinenursesassociation@yahoo.com.ph
Website: www.pna-ph.org

BOARD OF GOVERNORS
2008

RUTH THELMA P. TINGDA
Chair
Governor, Region I

FLORENCE A. ALCAZAR
Corporate Secretary
Governor, Region IX

LEAH G. SAMACO-PAQUIZ
President
Governor, NCR Zone 2

SUSANA A. SALVACION
VP Programs & Development
Governor, Region IV

ROBERTO V. PALEC
VP Finance
Governor, Region XI

NORA GARCIA-CRUZ
Treasurer
Governor, Region III

LETICIA B. PUGUON
Governor, Region II

EMERLINDA E. ALCALA
Governor, Region V

EUNICE I. BEDONIA
Governor, Region VI

ROLAND L. FERMO
Governor, Region VII

BELEN L. TABALE
Governor, Region VIII

CARMENCITA M. LUBGUBAN
Governor, Region X

FELINA M. HERNANDEZ
Governor, Region XII

TERESITA I. BARCELO
Governor, NCR Zone 1

MA. ASUNCION M. GONZAGA
Governor, NCR Zone 3

LOUISE MARIE D. FLORES
Governor, NCR Zones 4 & 5

CORNELIA T. CHAVEZ
Governor, NCR Zone 6

MARISTELA P. ABENOJAR
Executive Director

The Philippine Nurses Association's
Position Paper on the Pending Bill Seeking Access to
Quality and Affordable Medicines for the People

The Philippine Constitution mandates the State "to adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall endeavour to make essential foods, health and other social services available to all the people at affordable cost."

Millions of Filipinos are dying due to infectious but treatable diseases because they have no access to them. According to the studies conducted by the National Drug Policy Program Group of the department of health (NDPP-DOH), the very expensive prices of medicine that are the highest in the ASEAN region, that is 250% - 1,600% higher than other countries as of 2002 are a factor to the continuing decline of the Philippine health care system.

The profit oriented Transnational corporations (TNC's) control the domestic drug industry commanding 72%-80% of the market to a high of 75%-90% as the remaining 32% is shared by both foreign and local players of the industry.; 12-15% of which is Filipino owned. There is no full-pledged Filipino drug industry because it does not have a petrochemical industry to process the basic raw material for medicines. The local drug industry is limited to formulating, processing, packaging and distributing the drug products of TNCs, but does not manufacture finished products from raw materials. Some functions merely as product licensees of the multinationals. The Filipino owned companies top in retailing the drugs.

TNCs dictate the prices of medicines, with the local firms paying royalties to their mother companies.

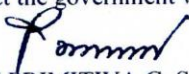
Ineffective and weak implementation of the Generic Law contributes to the high cost of medicines.

Government should answer the problem of making safe and effective medicines affordable for the Filipino people at low costs:

- Compulsory licensing for medicines should be part of the patent law.
- Parallel importation of medicines is a scheme where similarly branded drugs that are cheaper in other countries are imported and introduced in the local market.
- The government should provide greater support to local drug companies by giving them incentives such as tax holidays, and reduction of taxes leading to its 100% elimination to lower their production costs and assure an adequate level of price competition.
- The government should assist local drug manufacturers build up their research and development capabilities in providing cheaper alternative medicines to tap abundant indigenous plants as raw materials and improve productivity, competitiveness and sustainability of Philippine pharmaceutical industry.
- Enforcement of price control of essential drugs, impose sanctions and penalties on firms overpricing their medicines and insist on the inspection of accounting books of drug companies to protect the consumers.

Let's put an end to the Transnational corporations' (TNC) monopoly control in the local industry.

Let the government work towards a self-reliant drug industry!


DR. LEAH PRIMITIVA G. SAMACO-PAQUIZ
Philippine Nurses Association
September 2, 2007