



PAMBANSANG SAMAHAN NG MGA NARS NG PILIPINAS, INC.

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ADDRESSING THE ISSUE ON NURSE-VOLUNTEERISM FOR A FEE!

*A Strategic Proposal of the **Philippine Nurses' Association**
For the Committee on Health, House of Representatives
February 16, 2011*

WHEREAS, the issue of **Nurse-Volunteerism for a Fee (NVF)** has been a perennial problem in public and private hospitals, exploiting thousands of Filipino nurses in the country by way of **saving money** by not hiring regular Staff Nurses to perform regular staff functions and at the same time **gaining profit from the payment** required from the nurse-volunteers before accepting them in the hospitals;

WHEREAS, the term “on-the-job training” has been misused by many hospitals to rationalize the unscrupulous practice of NVF creating confusion and false hopes among the ranks of some **257,296 unemployed Filipino nurses** in the country (DOLE, PRC-BON, January 20, 2011) that undergoing NVF would expedite their hiring process for local and foreign employment;

WHEREAS, **oversupply of nursing graduates** produced by 491 nursing schools (CHED, 2011) further aggravated the unemployment problem of nurses which is basically rooted to the following factors: (1) non-implementation of DOH Hospital Staffing Standards of 1 Nurse:12 patients ratio in regular hospital wards or 1 Nurse: 20,000 population in the community health setting; (2) lack of political will to create plantilla positions for nurses in areas where essential health services are not accessible to many poor Filipinos; (3) inequitable distribution of nursing personnel; (4) poor implementation of closure of nursing schools with below 30% passing rate in the Nurse Licensure Examinations (NLE) and moratorium for operation of new nursing schools; and (5) absence of law/s to stop the NVF;

WHEREAS, Article II, Section 2 – Declaration of Policy of the Philippine Nursing Act, RA 9173 mandated that “The State hereby guarantees the delivery of quality basic health services through an adequate nursing personnel system throughout the country;”

and therefore, absence of employee-employer relationship under the NVF **will endanger patient's right to quality nursing care;**

WHEREAS, the conditions **of foreign employment for nurses DO NOT consider “volunteer services” by our nurses** since destination countries requiring nursing services for their own health care needs now demand 2-3 years of ACTUAL NURSING WORK EXPERIENCES and not the so-called “ON-THE-JOB TRAINING (OJT) or VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES no matter how long these are undertaken;

WHEREAS, the Administration of President Benigno S. Aquino, III committed to the Filipino people that **Universal Health Care** will be providing basic and essential health services **to 66 Million poor Filipinos** (IBON Databank Foundation, 2010) are residing in the communities who cannot afford the cost of basic and essential health care;

WHEREAS, the Filipino nurses being the largest sector of health professionals are vital force in the implementation of the Universal Health Care to attain the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);**

NOW THEREFORE, the Philippine Nurses Association (PNA) the only Accredited Professional Organization of Filipino nurses in the country, do hereby recommends to the Committee on Health of the House of Representatives to adopt a legislation that will:

1. Enact a law that will ban the exploitative and unethical practice of Nurse-Volunteerism for a Fee in all hospitals, whether public or private hospitals and ensure adequate nurse – patient ratio to protect the health of Filipino people;
2. Promote Independent Nurse Practice to enable people in the communities to access essential and basic health services while providing job opportunities for many unemployed nurses; and
3. Mandate the PHILHEALTH to reimburse home care nursing services rendered by Independent Nurse Practitioners to clients in the communities.

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