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Duque orders probe of complaint on foreign doctors

MANILA, Philippines — Health Secretary Francisco Duque III has ordered an investigation into the employment of foreign doctors in some hospitals without the necessary permits.

Duque directed the Human Resource for Health Development Bureau of the Department of Health (DOH) to look into the issue, which was raised by Sen. Richard Gordon.

“I have instructed the bureau to investigate immediately, based on a letter sent to me by Senator Gordon last week. We looked at the content of the letter, we will address the points raised,” Duque said yesterday.

Duque said that as a policy, foreign doctors cannot be allowed to practice in the Philippines unless there is a reciprocity agreement with their countries of origin.

This means that Filipino doctors will also be allowed to work in these countries in exchange for their physicians working in the Philippines.

Duque said the Philippines does not have such agreement with the countries mentioned by Gordon.

The senator discovered that there are Pakistani or Nepalese doctors working as medical consultants at the James L. Gordon Memorial Hospital, a government-run facility in Olongapo City.

Meanwhile, the Bureau of Immigration (BI) will investigate reports that a “syndicate” is behind the employment of foreign doctors in the country.

BI spokesperson Dana Sandoval said the bureau will coordinate with Gordon, who revealed the information over the weekend, as well as with the Professional Regulation Commission, the agency in charge of issuing licenses to professionals.

Sandoval said the bureau is bent on ridding the country of illegal aliens. – **With Evelyn Macairan**