



## DOH releases ₱14.3 B for health workers' benefits; protests to continue

By ANALOU DE VERA and GABRIELA BARON

Health workers from various hospitals are set to hold another mass protest today, Sept. 6, even

as the Department of Health (DOH) said that more than ₱14 billion have already been released for the provision of benefits for healthcare workers who are attending to those afflicted with coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

The DOH said that ₱14.3 billion worth of benefits for healthcare workers, both in public and private health facilities, "has been disbursed" covering the period of Sept. 15 to Dec. 19, 2020 (Period 1) and December 20, 2020 to June 30, 2021 (Period 2). ▶8

**₱14.3 B**  
disbursed from

Sept. 15 to Dec. 19, 2020  
(Period 1)

Dec. 20, 2020 to June 30, 2021  
(Period 2)



## DOH releases ₱14.3 B...

1 ◀

"Maliwanag sa amin ang sakripisyo ng mga medical frontliners (The sacrifices of the medical frontliners are clear to us)...They, like many others, put their lives at-risk every day in order to serve patients from all over the country and from all walks of life," said Health Secretary Francisco Duque III in a statement yesterday.

"Kaya sinisiguro namin na maibigay ang benepisyo sa pinakamaagang panahon, at ipaglalaban talaga namin ang budget para sa patuloy na pagkakaroon nitong mga benepisyo sa susunod na taon (This is why we are making sure that the benefits are provided as soon as possible, and we will really be pushing for additional budget for the continued availability of these until next year)," he added.

On Aug. 21, President Duterte gave the DOH and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) 10 days to pay the benefits of health workers.

### Infuriated health workers

However, the DOH allegedly failed once more to release the benefits, despite the 10-day ultimatum.

"Anong petsa na? Wala pa ring gumagalaw sa mga opisyal ng gobyerno. Hindi na yata nakikinig sa presidente ang DOH at DBM at pinipilit pa rin nila ang sariling interpretasyon sa Bayanihan 2. Nakakadismaya't nakakagalit ang pagmamatigas nila (What date is it already? Government officials are still not taking action. The DOH and DBM no longer listen to the president that's why they are still pushing their own interpretation of Bayanihan 2. Their stubbornness is disappointing and infuriating)," St. Luke's Medical Center Quezon City union President Jao Clumia said.

Clumia lamented that even if the DBM has allotted funds following the president's order to remunerate the health workers, its scope remains limited to a select few, leaving out

hundreds of thousands of medical and allied workers nationwide.

By not meeting the deadline, Clumia said the government "infuriated health workers more" with their negligence and incompetence.

"The blatant and systemic neglect of hospital employees coupled with the recent allegations of corruption speaks volumes of the government's mishandling of the pandemic. Our demands are no longer limited to our mandated benefits, but we also seek protection and greater state subsidies for all workers in order to combat the health and economic crisis," Clumia said.

### Disbursements

For Period 1, the DOH stated that P6.4 billion has been disbursed for the active hazard duty pay for 384,159 healthcare workers and special risk allowance for 306,314 healthcare workers.

"For the meals, accommodation, and transportation (MAT) allowances, 103,096 healthcare workers received MAT worth P990.9 million," it added.

For Period 2, the DOH said P6.9 billion "worth of SRA was disbursed for SRAs of 379,117 healthcare workers."

Furthermore, 32,281 healthcare workers "were covered with life insurance worth P16 million," it said.

The DOH also reported that P570 million worth of checks "has also been released to 24,034 healthcare workers as COVID-19 sickness and death compensation."

"As stated in the guidelines, the DOH, through its Centers for Health Development (CHD) enters into a Memorandum of Understanding with health facilities to legally disburse these benefits," the DOH said.

"The health facilities are then responsible for disbursing these to the employees and submitting a liquidation report thereafter," it added.