



'P14 B disbursed for health workers'

By **MAYEN JAYMALIN**

Some P14.3 billion has been disbursed for the benefits of healthcare workers (HCWs), the Department of Health (DOH) reported over the weekend.

The benefits were disbursed in two tranches – the first from Sept. 15 to Dec. 19, 2020, and the second from Dec. 20, 2020, to June 30, 2021, the DOH said.

"We clearly recognize the sacrifices of our medical frontliners. Within the DOH family includes

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72 hospitals with more than 10,000 medical frontliners. 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," Health Secretary Francisco Duque III said in a statement issued

yesterday.

"That's why we guarantee the giving of the benefits at the earliest time; and we will really fight for the budget for the continued provision of these benefits next year," he added.

For Period 1, DOH reported

that P6.4 billion has been disbursed for payment of active hazard duty pay of 384,159 healthcare workers and special risk allowance (SRA) for 306,314 HCWs as well as for the meals, accommodation and transportation (MAT) allowances of 103,096.

The DOH noted that for Period 2, P6.9 billion was disbursed for the SRA of 379,117

HCWs. Also, 32,281 HCWs received life insurance amounting to P16 million.

In addition, P570 million worth of checks has also been released to 24,034 HCWs as COVID-19 sickness and death compensation, the DOH said.

Healthcare workers from both public and private facilities attending to COVID-19

patients are recipients of the benefits.

During the Laging Handa public briefing Saturday, Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire reported that 97,560 more HCWs will receive their SRAs coming from the additional P888 million released by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

"After this batch, only a few are still missing their SRA compensation," Vergeire said, adding that the DOH has already released P7 billion for the SRA of 300,000 HCWs.

She said the DBM is expected to release another budget for HCWs eligible to receive the SRA as the DOH continues to process the list.