Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 1397

Introduced by
BAYAN MUNA Representatives FERDINAND R. GAITE,
CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE and EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT,
ACT TEACHERS Party-List Representative FRANCIS E. CASTRO,
GABRIELA Women’s Party Representative ARLENE D. BROSAS
and KABATAAN Party-List Representative SARAH JANE I. ELAGO

RESOLUTION
URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT AND
THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO IMMEDIATELY PROVIDE FUNDS
AND RELEASE THE HAZARD PAY AND SPECIAL RISK ALLOWANCE
TO ALL HEALTH WORKERS

WHEREAS, as of November 30, 2020, the Department of Health recorded 12,457 health
workers positive for COVID-19. Of these, 12,208 (98.0%) have recovered, 76 (0.6%) have died
and 173 (1.4%) were active cases. Of these active cases, 80 (46.2%) were mild cases, 61 (35.3%)
were asymptomatic, 17 (9.8%) in severe condition, 11 (6.4%) in critical condition and 4 (2.3%) in
moderate condition;

WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 11494 or Bayanihan to Recover as One Act approved on
September 11, 2020, provides for the provision of COVID-19 special risk allowance for all public
and private health workers directly catering to or in contact with COVID-19 patients, in addition
to the hazard pay granted under Republic Act No. 7305 or the Magna Carta of Public Health
Workers. The amount of P13.5 Billion will be raised for health-related responses including the
special risk allowance and actual hazard duty pay for all health workers;

WHEREAS, on November 16, 2020, President Rodrigo Duterte signed Administrative Order
Nos. 35 and 36, authorizing the grant of active duty hazard pay to human resources for health and
the grant of COVID-19 special risk allowance for private and public health workers, respectively.
AO 35 provides for P3,000/month active hazard duty pay, pro-rated on the number of days of
physical work. AO 36 grants special risk allowance of not exceeding P5,000/month to public and
private health workers who directly cater or are in contact with COVID-19 patients. Both benefits
are in in addition to Hazard Pay, Hazardous Duty Pay, Hazard Allowance, Special Risk Allowance
or other similar benefits, and exempt from income tax;

WHEREAS, Republic Act 11469 or the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act signed on March 24, 2020
earlier provided for COVID 19 special risk allowance to all public health workers in addition to
the hazard pay provided under the Magna Carta of Public Health Workers. Consequently,
Administrative Order No. 28 signed on April 16, 2020 provided for special risk allowance to public
health workers during ECQ. Administrative Order No 26 signed on March 23, 2020 provided for

1 https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1WxU8TbgGk1WgP0OYiUZCuFhG_nndc0oCa
COVID-19 hazard pay to government personnel reporting for work during ECQ. Both AO 26 and 28 provided that funding shall be sourced from the Personnel Services of the agencies in the case of regular, contractual, casual and part-time positions and from the Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses for the Contract of Service and Job Order employees;

WHEREAS, with RA 11469 and AO 26 and 28 no longer in effect, many health workers complained that they have not received the benefits due them under the said law and issuances. According to the Department of Health on November 18, 2020 there are 16,764 health workers who have not received the benefits. This number does not include the 4,275 health workers from the Philippine General Hospital as reported by All UP Workers Union - Manila Chapter;

WHEREAS, on November 20 and 27, 2020, health workers from the PGH, the biggest tertiary hospital and one of the COVID-19 referral centers, held protest actions and called for the immediate release of their benefits. The Department of Budget and Management reportedly advised the PGH officials to source the benefits from savings. However, PGH Director Gerardo Legaspi said that PGH have already spent their funds on the patients and infrastructure for COVID-19 related services. DBM said that it had already released funds on May 26, 2020 to pay for the allowances and had even augmented the PGH’s fund;

WHEREAS, aside from PGH health workers, many other nurses and health workers have not received the said COVID 19 hazard pay and special risk allowance. These include health workers from East Avenue Medical Center, Quezon City Health Department, Pasig City Children’s Hospital, Western Visayas Medical Center, West Visayas State University Medical Center, according to the reports gathered by the Filipino Nurses United;

WHEREAS, while the government reportedly disbursed some P842 million for the hazard pay of 86,348 medical frontliners, Senator Pia Cayetano said that there is no more funds. The approved PS and MOOE of hospitals and health facilities for 2020 have not included the COVID-19 hazard pay and special risk allowance. AO 28 particularly provided that in case of insufficient funds, the agencies may submit a special budget request to DBM;

WHEREAS, as of November 29, 2020, PGH Director Legaspi said the transfer of funds for the said dues and allowances has been approved by UP System officials. DOH Secretary Francisco Duque III reported that that P94 million has been allocated for the health workers’ special risk allowance and hazard pay under RA 11494;

WHEREAS, Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque on November 24 urged the DOH to hasten the release of the hazard pay for medical workers on the frontlines of the battle against COVID-19 or risk being suspended;

WHEREAS, health workers decry not only the delays in the release of hazard pay and special risk allowance but also the limited time and coverage of the benefits. Alliance of Health Workers claimed that the hazard pay and special risk allowance are inadequate and limited, deceptive and divisive and only show the government’s insincerity to truly protect and support the health workers;

WHEREAS, AO 28 and subsequent DBM issuances limited the provision of special risk allowance to those in direct contact with COVID-19 patients only, thus excluding other health workers who were likewise exposed, and have actually been infected, regardless of their area or patient assignment in the hospital or health facility. The DBM insisted that COVID-19 Hazard Pay is not an add-on benefit to the existing Hazard Pay of government personnel, thus the health worker can only receive one benefit - either the COVID-19 hazard pay or Magna Carta Hazard Pay.

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3 https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1365986/dbm-says-it-has-released-funds-for-pgh-frontliners
pay, whichever is higher. These are contrary to section 4 (d) of RA 11469 which stated that the benefit is provided “to ensure that all public health health are protected” and “in addition” to existing Magna Carta hazard pay. The limited period of benefit provision during the ECQ and MECQ only defeats the very purpose of protecting the health workers from the risks of COVID-19 which obviously continue even after the ECQ and MECQ, or even during and after GCQ or MGCQ for that matter;

WHEREAS, the benefits are indeed too little, and too late, as in the case of some health workers who have retired or died without ever receiving the COVID-19 hazard pay and special risk allowance. Such is also the case of Nurse Maria Theresa Cruz, 47 years old, from Cainta Municipal Hospital, who died of COVID-19 on July 22, 2020. After her death, Nurse Theresa's family received only P60 worth of hazard pay and special risk allowance, since the Magna Carta hazard pay was deducted, far from the P500/day hazard pay promised by DOH press releases⁹;

WHEREAS, there is a need for Congress, composed of duly elected representatives of the districts and partylists, to ensure that adequate protection and support is provided to all health workers. Our health workers have suffered so much, lost so much, and continue to risk their own health and lives as they provide crucial health services to save the lives of our people. The delays, inadequacy and selective benefit provision do not in any way protect, support or increase the morale or inspire our health workers, much more speak of the supposed recognition for their selfless sacrifice and services;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the House of Representatives urge the Department of Budget and Management and the Department of Health to immediately provide funds and release the hazard pay and special risk allowance to all health workers.

Adopted,

[Signatures]

REP. FERDINAND R. GAITE
Bayan Muna Partylist

REP. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE
Bayan Muna Partylist

REP. FRANCIS L. CASTRO
ACT Teachers Partylist

REP. EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT
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REP. SARAH JANE I. ELAGO
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