

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Resolution No. 1744



Introduced by
ANAKALUSUGAN PARTY-LIST REPRESENTATIVE MICHAEL T. DEFENSOR

**RESOLUTION CALLING FOR AN INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION BY
THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
REGARDING THE CONTINUED USE OF REMDESIVIR IN THE
TREATMENT OF COVID-19 CASES**

WHEREAS, Article II Section 15 of the 1987 Constitution states that “The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.”

WHEREAS, the Philippines has recorded a total of 1,054, 983 Covid-19 cases with 966,080 recoveries, 17,431 deaths and with 17,472 active cases as of 2 May 2021¹;

WHEREAS, on 20 November 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended against the use of Remdesivir for Covid-19 patients, stating that “the use of remdesivir in hospitalized patients, regardless of disease severity, as there is currently no evidence that remdesivir improves survival and other outcomes in these patients.”²

WHEREAS, the recommendation was based on the results of the Solidarity trial, which was an “international clinical trial to help find an effective treatment for COVID-19, launched by the World Health Organization and partners. It is one of the largest international randomized trials for COVID-19 treatments, enrolling almost 12,000 patients in 500 hospital sites in over 30 countries.”³

WHEREAS, The Solidarity Trial “found that all 4 treatments evaluated (**REMDESIVIR**⁴, hydroxychloroquine, lopinavir/ritonavir and interferon) had little or no effect on overall mortality, initiation of ventilation and duration of hospital stay in hospitalized patients.”⁵

¹ <https://doh.gov.ph/covid-19/case-tracker>

² <https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/who-recommends-against-the-use-of-remdesivir-in-covid-19-patients>

³ <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/global-research-on-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov/solidarity-clinical-trial-for-covid-19-treatments>

⁴ Emphasis ours

⁵ <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/global-research-on-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov/solidarity-clinical-trial-for-covid-19-treatments>

WHEREAS, it is worth noting that our very own Department of Health participated in the WHO Solidarity Trial, stating in its 22 April 2020 press release that: “The Department of Health (DOH) today announced that the participation of the Philippines to the WHO Solidarity trial has been approved by the Single Joint Research Ethics Board (SJREB) last April 17, in support of the COVID-19 global response.”⁶

WHEREAS, the DOH-Disease Prevention and Control Bureau admitted that it previously earmarked a P1-billion budget for the potential procurement of additional Remdesivir, however, it cited the WHO Solidarity Trial as having struck out the inclusion of Remdesivir among its investigational drugs.⁷

WHEREAS, during the start of the Covid surge in March 2021, various news sources quoted the Department of Health (DOH) as vowing “to provide P5 million funding to each DOH hospital in Metro Manila, Central Luzon, and Calabarzon “to ensure unhampered supply of COVID-19 therapeutics”⁸, referring to Remdesivir and Tocilizumab, inspite of the results of the WHO Solidarity Trial;

WHEREAS, even the pricing of Remdesivir makes it a highly questionable treatment protocol given that we are a Third World country: “According to reports, Remdesivir only costs around P589 in India, but is being dispensed to patients in the Philippines at a staggering cost of P15,000 to P28,000 per vial, given twice a day for 10 days, or for a low of P300,000 to a high of P560,000 per patient, chargeable to PhilHealth.”⁹ Even the Department of Health was compelled to issue a warning against overpriced Remdesivir, citing that “... a 100-milligram vial of remdesivir must only cost P1,500 to P8,200.”¹⁰

WHEREAS, given the WHO Solidarity Trial recommendation against the use of Remdesivir for the treatment of Covid-19 cases and its staggering prices, there is a need to investigate the reason for its continuing preferential use in the country;

THEREFORE, be it resolved as it is hereby resolved, that the Committee on Justice of the House of Representatives conduct an inquiry in aid of legislation regarding the continuing use of Remdesivir against Covid-19 cases in the country.

Adopted,


MICHAEL T. DEFENSOR

⁶ <https://www.who.int/philippines/news/detail/22-04-2020-ph-solidarity-trial-for-covid-19-treatments-receives-green-light-from-ethics-review-body>

⁷ <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1411432/stocks-of-remdesivir-tocilizumab-in-ph-running-low-doh>

⁸ <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1411432/stocks-of-remdesivir-tocilizumab-in-ph-running-low-doh>

⁹ <https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/351569>

¹⁰ <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/784894/how-much-should-remdesivir-really-cost-doh-warns-public-vs-overpricing/story/>