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CONSULTATIVE MEETING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Veterans Affairs	Status of operation of the Veterans Memorial Medical Center (VMMC)	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Leopoldo Bataoil (2nd District, Pangasinan), held a consultative meeting with the VMMC officials and medical staff to discuss the status of operations of the hospital in North Avenue, Quezon City.</p> <p>Aside from Rep. Bataoil, other House Members present in the said consultative meeting were Committee Vice Chair Muntinlupa City Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon and AASENSO Party-List Rep. Teodoro Montoro.</p> <p>VMMC Director Dominador Chiong sought the Committee's support for VMMC's bid to increase government's subsidy to finance the creation of additional positions and purchase of additional medicines. Currently, Chiong said, the VMMC's manpower complement is way below the staffing standard for a tertiary medical center with a 766-bed capacity, as approved by the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) in 2013. He also informed the Committee that the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) has already sent notice terminating its annual grant of US\$500,000 to the VMMC, thereby adding to the hospital's financial dilemma.</p> <p>Responding to the query of Rep. Bataoil, Chiong said that the VMMC is coordinating with V. Luna Medical Center in responding to the surgical and other medical needs of the wounded soldiers in Marawi City. Although, currently, most of the wounded government troops are being treated in Cagayan de Oro City, Chiong said.</p> <p>Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO) Administrator Ernesto Carolina suggested that HB 1240 be amended to focus instead on the modernization and rehabilitation of the VMMC. [HB 1240, authored by Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2nd District, Pampanga), seeks to grant juridical personality to the VMMC. The bill was approved at the Committee level on February 7, 2017].</p> <p>Carolina also pushed for the approval of a bill establishing VMMCs in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. (HB 1141, authored by MAGDALO Party-List Rep. Gary Alejano, seeks the establishment of one VMMC each for Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao with a minimum capacity of 25 hospital beds under the supervision of the PVAO. The bill was referred to the Committee on Health.)</p> <p>The three lawmakers promised to support VMMC's budget proposal for year 2018 during the Committee on Appropriations deliberations on the national budget later this year.</p> <p>The Committee also conducted an ocular inspection of the various medical units of the VMMC.</p> <p>Earlier in the day, the three House Members were invited as guest speakers in VMMC's flag raising ceremony during which they vowed to push for legislative measures that would uphold the welfare and alleviate the plight of the veterans, military retirees, and their dependents.</p>