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DISCUSSION WITH AGENCIES/ENTITIES

COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Health	Discussion with concerned government agencies and stakeholders on the draft Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of RA 11215 or the National Integrated Cancer Control Act	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Angelina "Helen" Tan, M.D. (4th District, Quezon), discussed with concerned government agencies and stakeholders the status of the IRR of RA 11215.</p> <p>Rep. Tan noted that after the law was signed on February 14, 2019, the Department of Health (DOH), which was designated as the lead agency in the implementation of the law, formed a technical working group (TWG) composed of various stakeholders to draft the IRR.</p> <p>In presenting the draft IRR prepared by the TWG, DOH Assistant Secretary Maria Rosario Vergeire emphasized the importance of the National Integrated Cancer Control Program which shall serve as the framework for all cancer management and control activities of the government. Ms. Vergeire likewise informed that the National Integrated Cancer Control Council, which will be attached to the DOH, shall be the policymaking, planning and coordinating body on cancer control. She also mentioned that the Committee will conduct another TWG meeting and public consultation before finalizing the IRR.</p> <p>Rep. Micaela Violago (2nd District, Nueva Ecija) underscored the need to designate regional cancer care centers and capacitate health care providers especially in the primary health care units to ensure the proper diagnostic and treatment of cancer in various parts of the country.</p> <p>Rep. Ma. Lourdes Aggabao (4th District, Isabela) emphasized the importance of expediting the implementation of the program and suggested that the DOH should already prepare the hospitals that will be identified as cancer care centers. DOH Director for Health Facilities Development Bureau (HFDB) Ma. Theresa Vera replied that the DOH has already started upgrading the DOH-managed hospitals in various regions to qualify as regional cancer care centers.</p> <p>Replying to the query of Rep. Milagros Aquino-Magsaysay (Party-List, Senior Citizen), Ms. Vergeire said that while currently the public has limited access to medicines for cancer patients, she is optimistic that with the implementation of RA 11215, this concern will be addressed.</p> <p>Rep. Tan suggested that the Cancer Assistance Fund, which will be created pursuant to RA 11215, should be included in National Expenditure Program (NEP) as basis for the General Appropriations Act. Ms. Vergeire disclosed that the DOH has included the amount for the fund in the Department's proposed 2020 budget. However, she is still unsure whether or not the Cancer Assistance Fund will be consolidated with other funds on health care.</p>