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OVERSIGHT MEETING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
House Panel of the Joint Congressional Oversight Committee on Public Expenditures jt. w/ Health	Assessment on the performance and expenditures of the Department of Health (DOH) for FY 2017-2019 and its budget proposal for FY 2020	<p>The House panel of the Joint Congressional Oversight Committee on Public Expenditures, presided by Rep. Angelina "Helen" Tan, M.D. (4th District, Quezon), conducted an oversight meeting joint with the Committee on Health to discuss the DOH's performance and expenditures for fiscal years 2017 to 2019 and its budget proposal for FY 2020.</p> <p>Rep. Tan, who is also the Chair of the House Committee on Health, said that the meeting was called to find out if DOH programs and projects, especially those mandated by law, have been fully funded and to discuss issues and concerns pertaining to the Health Facilities Enhancement Program (HFEP).</p> <p>In his presentation, DOH Undersecretary Mario Villaverde stated that 83% of DOH's commitment targets in 2017 and 2018 have been fulfilled. He also mentioned that funding for the HFEP was affected by the huge decrease in the FY 2019 budget of the DOH due to the government's transition to cash-based budgeting. He explained that the 34% decrease in the 2019 budget of the DOH led to the reduction of its capital outlay, from P31 billion to P50 million, which is the main funding source of the HFEP.</p> <p>Villaverde also explained the reasons for the low budget utilization of the DOH for the past two years, citing the challenges in complying with the procurement process, the difficulty in identifying and preparing the sites for health infrastructure projects, and the limited warehouse space for medicines and other medical supplies.</p> <p>One of the budget priorities of the DOH for CY 2020 mentioned by Villaverde is the implementation of RA 11223 or the Universal Health Care Act.</p> <p>Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2nd District, Pampanga) suggested the reallocation of DOH's unutilized budget in 2018 to this year's priority programs and projects such as the construction of additional warehouses to improve the utilization rate of its public health programs.</p> <p>Health Secretary Francisco Duque III acknowledged the Speaker's suggestion, confirming the DOH's problem of lack of warehouse space. He added that the DOH is now undertaking the procurement process at the regional level, instead of just concentrating the process at its main office, to facilitate the procurement of goods and services.</p> <p>Several House Members suggested that the DOH should likewise improve its system of storage and distribution of medicines and medical supplies to avoid wastage.</p>