



# Committee Daily Bulletin

18<sup>th</sup> Congress  
Second Regular Session

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## COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Health	Substitute Bill to HB 4093	Rep. Defensor	Providing a free annual medical check-up for Filipinos	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Angelina "Helen" Tan, M.D. (4<sup>th</sup> District, Quezon), approved the Substitute Bill to HB 4093.</p> <p>Rep. Michael Defensor (Party-List, ANAKALUSUGAN) said that the recently passed Universal Health Care Law highlights the importance of primary health care in promoting the wellness of the Filipino people. One of the aspects of health care is preventive care under which medical check-up falls, including physical examination and diagnostic tests. Thus, Rep. Defensor said that the proposed law seeks to provide free annual medical check-ups to every Filipino which will initially include blood sugar and cholesterol tests. The covered tests can be expanded subject to the availability of funds of the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth).</p>
	Substitute Bill to HB 1104	Rep. Tan	Establishing a multi-specialty hospital in the City of Lucena, Province of Quezon to be known as the Southern Luzon Multi-Specialty Medical Center, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the Substitute Bill to HB 1104 subject to style and amendment.
	HB 1153	Rep. Romualdez (Y.M.)	Establishing a tertiary hospital under the control, supervision, and management of the Department of Health (DOH) in the City of Calbayog, Samar to be known as the Samar Island Medical Center, appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 1153.
	HB 1405	Rep. Vargas	Upgrading the Novaliches District Hospital in Barangay San Bartolome, Quezon City and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 1405.
	HB 1583	Rep. Sangcopan	Expanding the mandate of Sulu Sanitarium in the Municipality of Jolo, Province of Sulu, to become the Sulu Sanitarium and General Hospital with at least level II capability and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 1583 subject to style and amendment.
	HB 2686	Rep. Gasataya	Creating the Bacolod-Negros Heart and Kidney Center and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 2686.
	HB 5501	Rep. Amante-Matba	Converting the Agusan del Norte Provincial Hospital in Butuan City, Province of Agusan del Norte into a level III teaching and training hospital to be known as the Agusan del Norte General Hospital and Training Center and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 5501 subject to style and amendment.

Continuation Health	HB 6536	Rep. Biron	Expanding the mandate and service capability of the Don Jose S. Monfort Medical Center extension hospital in the Municipality of Barotac Nuevo, Iloilo, renaming the same as Don Jose S. Monfort Medical Center and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 6536.
	HB 6775	Rep. Gorriceta	Expanding the mandate and service capability of the Western Visayas Sanitarium in the Municipality of Santa Barbara, Iloilo, renaming the hospital as Western Visayas Sanitarium and General Hospital, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 6775 subject to style and amendment.
	HB 6965	Rep. Enverga	Re-nationalizing Claro M. Recto Memorial District Hospital located in the Municipality of Infanta, Province of Quezon, placing it under the direct supervision and control of the DOH, increasing its bed capacity to 100, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 6965.
	HB 49	Rep. Cabochan	Establishing Veteran Memorial Medical Centers in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao	The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to fine-tune the bill.
	HBs 6096, 6383, 6633, 6651, 6655, 6711, 6718, 7013 & 7243	Reps. Salceda, Haresco, Tan (A.), Garcia (J.E.), Deloso Montalla, Chipeco, Deputy Speaker Hernandez, Reps. Vargas and Espino	Establishing the Philippine Center for Disease Control and Prevention	<p>The Committee agreed to create a TWG to discuss the bills further.</p> <p>Committee Vice Chair Rep. Jose Enrique "Joet" Garcia III (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Bataan) was designated to head the TWG.</p> <p>Rep. Tan, author of HB 6633, said that the proposed establishment of the Philippine Center for Disease Control and Prevention is a priority bill of the House of Representatives and was endorsed by President Rodrigo Duterte during his recent State of the Nation Address.</p> <p>Rep. Tan underscored the importance of the passage of the proposed law especially during this time of pandemic. She pointed out that even if COVID-19 will be eradicated, there will be other diseases that will emerge or re-emerge in the future. Hence, the establishment of the Center plays a critical role for human survival and progress.</p> <p>The Center, according to Rep. Tan, is envisioned to be the nations' leading science-based, data-driven, and service-oriented organization that protects the public's health. Likewise, the proposed law seeks to enhance, develop, and use scientific expertise to bring a new level of preparedness in the Philippines' health system and eliminate certain diseases to bring an end to the devastation of epidemics.</p> <p>Rep. Garcia, author of HB 6651, said that the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted some institutional weaknesses in the country's health system which to him can be addressed through the establishment of an independent agency having a central chain of command that can readily respond to the pandemic as well as to emerging infectious diseases in the future.</p>

Continuation... Health				<p>Rep. Cheryl Deloso-Montalla (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Zambales), author of HB 6655, said that it is time to veer away from piecemeal legislations and focus on proactive and comprehensive approaches in dealing with diseases. She added that it is time to embrace the one-health approach, through the creation of the Center, in holistically addressing the problems concerning public health.</p> <p>Department of Health Undersecretary Myrna Cabotaje made some recommendations to ensure that the proposed law will complement the Universal Health Care (UHC) Act and the Mandatory Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Health Events of Public Health Concern Act. Among her recommendations are the strengthening of local response capacity and the harmonization of the proposal to create the Center with the current reorganization efforts of the national health system as mandated under the UHC Law.</p> <p>Presidential Legislative Liaison Office (PLLO) Undersecretary Jacinto Paras relayed President Rodrigo Duterte's suggestion to create an authority or a department, instead of a center, to make it more responsive to public health concerns.</p> <p>The Committee asked the stakeholders to submit their official position papers for consideration by the TWG.</p>
	HB 426	Rep. Rodriguez	Establishing a 50-bed district satellite hospital of the Northern Mindanao Medical Center in Barangay Tablon in the Second District of Cagayan De Oro City to be known as the Barangay Tablon-Northern Mindanao Medical Center District Satellite Hospital and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee decided to defer action on HB 426 subject to the agreement of the bill's author, Rep. Rufus Rodriguez (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Cagayan de Oro City), with the DOH's recommendation.</p> <p>DOH Health Management Officer Roderick Napulan informed the Committee that the City Government of Cagayan de Oro has included in its local investment plan for health the establishment of a 25-bed infirmary in Brgy. Tablon which is now under construction. Napulan suggested that the establishment of the infirmary be pursued instead of the proposed district satellite hospital.</p>
<b>Housing and Urban Development</b>	HB 1176	Deputy Speaker Romero	Increasing the capitalization of the National Housing Authority (NHA), expanding and accelerating its urban land reform and social housing program	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Strike Revilla (2 <sup>nd</sup> District, Cavite), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to craft a substitute bill to the nine bills.
	HBs 2450, 4759, 7079 & 7291	Reps. Sy-Alvarado, Nieto, Deputy Speaker Villafuerte, and Rep. Tambunting	Providing for a national housing development, production, and financing program, regularizing its appropriation for its implementation	<p>Rep. Francisco "Kiko" Benitez (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Negros Occidental) was designated as TWG Chair.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Revilla said that the current year's budget of P6.3 billion for various housing programs of the government is only 0.15% of the P4.1 trillion national budget, which is not enough to address the 6.5 million housing needs. He added that according to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the Government Service Insurance System and the Social Security System are presently allotting only a low percentage of their investible funds for housing loans due to charter limitations.</p>
	HBs 2564 & 4902	Reps. Castelo and Nieto	Providing for the resettlement, aid, and rehabilitation services for the underprivileged and homeless citizens and informal settlers affected by the demolition of houses/dwellings along danger areas, as well as the victims of disasters and calamities and those affected by government infrastructure projects in urban areas	Furthermore, Revilla apprised the body that recommendations from the housing sector to exempt social housing programs from documentary

<p>Continuation... Housing and Urban Development</p>	<p>HBs 3541 &amp; 3837</p>	<p>Rep. Violago and Majority Leader Romualdez</p>	<p>Establishing a Unified Housing and Urban Development Fund and a Centralized Home Financing Program, amending for the purpose RA 7835, otherwise known as the Comprehensive and Integrated Shelter Financing Act (CISFA) of 1994</p>	<p>stamp tax and value added tax are deemed by the Department of Finance to be inimical to the objective of the Passive Income and Financial Intermediary Taxation Act (PIFITA) or the Package 4 of the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion Act (TRAIN) law. Hence, Rep. Revilla said that through these bills, adequate budgetary support will be provided to the social housing programs of the government.</p> <p>The nine bills under consideration intend to address the housing backlogs in the country by amending the CISFA and establishing a Unified Housing and Urban Development Fund and the Centralized Home Financing Program that will provide long-term and affordable financing and lending mechanism to qualified low-income earners.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Benitez relative to the housing component of the Balik Probinsya Program, NHA Assistant General Manager Victor Balba said that it would cover low-income families and informal settler families (ISFs). Balba added that NHA has made initial coordination with the local government units (LGUs) regarding the land requirements and has created a list of all ISF beneficiaries. However, Balba said that the program has been suspended temporarily due to health risks brought about by the pandemic but implementation may resume in September.</p> <p>Rep. Eufemia "Ka Femia" Cullamat (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA) emphasized that the rights of indigenous peoples must be respected under the provision on resettlement in the proposed measures.</p> <p>Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) Director Mylene Rivera favors the legislative proposal to further augment the budget for socialized housing, considering that for the past 30 years, only less than 1% of the annual national budget is being allocated to this sector. She also apprised the body that out of the P13.73 billion budget allocation for the NHA's socialized housing program this year under the CISFA, only Php 7.61 billion was released so far.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Bureau of Treasury's (BTr) Research Service Director Robert Dominick Mariano mentioned that as of 2007, P20.71 billion has already been released to the Home Guaranty Corporation, now Philippine Guarantee Corporation (PGC), National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation (NHMFC), and the NHA for socialized housing purposes.</p> <p>PGC Senior Vice President Jimmy Sarena reported that the appropriated increase in the capitalization of the PGC amounting to P50 billion was not released in full. On the other hand, the representative of NHMFC, Rundstedt Jalbuna, reported that the additional capitalization of P5 billion from CISFA was released to the corporation.</p> <p>On the part of the Social Housing Finance Corporation (SHFC), OIC-Vice President Florencio Carandang Jr. said that a total of P12.78 billion</p>
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Continuation... Housing and Urban Development				<p>allotted under the CISFA for the SHFC's Community Mortgage Program was fully released in several tranches from 2015 to 2017. He added that a total of 330,000 ISFs benefitted from the program. National Economic and Development Authority's Public Investment Program Focal Person Ramon Falcon said that the increase in the budget of the NHA, as proposed in HB 1176, is already included in the Philippine Development Plan.</p> <p>On the other hand, Department of Budget and Management's Budget Technical Bureau OIC-Director John Aries Macaspac said that the proposed budgetary increases for the housing sector must be balanced with the government's financial capacity. He suggested that new revenue sources must likewise be identified for the said purpose.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bills.</p>
Tourism	HB 786	Rep. Biazon	Requiring personnel of business establishments, members of organizations or associations, and all other persons providing tourism services to undergo basic first aid training	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Sol Aragonces (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Laguna), approved HB 786 subject to style.</p> <p>Muntinlupa City Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon, author of HB 786, underscored the need for tourist guides and other individuals providing tourism services to have undergone at least a basic first aid training to be able to provide immediate help in case of accidents involving tourists.</p> <p>Expressing their support for the bill were the Department of Tourism (DOT) and the Philippine Red Cross.</p>
	HB 1115	Rep. Atienza	Making it compulsory for all international airlines landing in the Philippines to play Philippine music immediately upon their arrival, as well as all public areas like tourist attractions, tourist buses, and business establishments	<p>The Committee approved HB 1115 subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Rep. Jose Atienza Jr. (Party-List, BUHAY), author of HB 1115, said that the playing of Philippine music by international airlines upon arrival in the Philippines is a good measure to further promote Philippine culture and arts and to also highlight the talents of Filipino artists. The same requirement is also proposed to be applied to tourist areas, buses, and business establishments.</p> <p>Several members expressed their support for the bill.</p> <p>Also supportive of the bill were the DOT, Board of Airline Representatives (BAR), International Air Transport Association (IATA), and the Hotel and Restaurant Association of the Philippines (HRAP).</p>
	HBs 1913 & 3945	Rep. Olivarez	Requiring the Philippine Postal Corporation (PHLPost) to print postage stamps depicting Philippine tourist attractions and destinations and to affix these stamps on outgoing mail matters to attract foreign tourists	<p>The Committee approved the consolidation of HBs 1913 and 3945.</p> <p>Rep. Eric Olivarez (1<sup>st</sup> District, Parañaque City), author of both bills, said that printing postage stamps that depict beautiful spots in the country and used in mails bound for foreign destinations is a good promotion strategy to increase the inflow of tourists in the Philippines. He added that the cost is minimal compared to the benefits it will bring to the country.</p>

Continuation... Tourism				<p>Baguio City Rep. Mark Go proposed that the bills also cover other stamps such as special events stamps and commemorative stamps.</p> <p>Expressing their support for the bills were the DOT and the PHLPost.</p>
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COMMITTEE MEETING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
<p><b>Public Accounts jt. w/ Good Government and Public Accountability</b></p>	<p>Deliberation on the allegations of graft and corruption against the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth)</p>	<p>The Joint Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Michael Defensor (Party-List, ANAKALUSUGAN), Chair of the Committee on Public Accounts, and Rep. "Kuya" Jose Antonio Sy-Alvarado (1<sup>st</sup> District, Bulacan), Chair of the Committee on Good Government and Public Accountability, will continue with its deliberation on allegations of graft and corruption against PhilHealth in its next meeting.</p> <p>In today's meeting, the Committee focused its discussion on PhilHealth's disbursement of funds under its Interim Reimbursement Mechanism (IRM) and the adoption of the case rate payment system, which according to several lawmakers, was the root of corruption in the agency.</p> <p>Senior Deputy Majority Leader Jesus Crispin Remulla (7<sup>th</sup> District, Cavite) said that although there are already several investigations being conducted about alleged anomalies in PhilHealth, it is incumbent upon the House of Representatives to conduct its own investigation for the purpose of crafting legislation that will serve the interest of the people.</p> <p>Minority Leader Bienvenido Abante Jr. (6<sup>th</sup> District, Manila), along with several lawmakers, questioned PhilHealth for granting P326 million to the Southern Philippines Medical Center (SPMC) in Davao City through its IRM. This amount was the largest received by any hospital in the country. The Philippine General Hospital (PGH) was only second, receiving P263 million, despite the fact that it is a designated COVID-19 referral hospital for NCR.</p> <p>The IRM provides emergency funding to hospitals, primary health care facilities, ambulatory surgical clinics, freestanding dialysis centers, and maternity care package providers to allow them to immediately provide healthcare services during calamities or fortuitous events, including the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>PhilHealth Senior Vice President Israel Francis Pargas denied the allegation of favoritism being a factor in PhilHealth's IRM allocation to hospitals. He explained that there is a set of requirements that health care institutions need to comply to qualify for such allocation. With regard to SPMC, the IRM share it received was determined by its average daily claim from the previous year.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Ferdinand Hernandez (2<sup>nd</sup> District, South Cotabato) defended the release of funds to SPMC as justified. According to him, the SPMC is one of the biggest hospitals in the country. Aside from having a 1,800-bed capacity and employing more than 3,000 health workers and staff, the SPMC also offers various specialty services such as hemodialysis. Deputy Speaker Hernandez said that the residents of Davao and the people in Mindanao rely on SPMC for their health service needs.</p> <p>On the other hand, Bacolod City Rep. Greg Gasataya noted that PhilHealth was not giving some hospitals, particularly those in Region 6, their due. Both he and Rep. Defensor were in agreement that the IRM guidelines should be made clearer to allow more hospitals to apply for and be granted eligibility.</p>

Continuation...  
Public Accounts jt. w/  
Good Government and  
Public Accountability

Rep. Bernadette Herrera-Dy (Party-List, Bagong Henerasyon) asked if PhilHealth is still disbursing funds through the IRM even up to now. Pargas answered in the negative, adding that the last disbursement was made in July.

On issues concerning the agency's case rate policy, Pargas told the Joint Committee that the policy was instituted to improve administrative efficiency because it was much simpler to implement and provided more transparency in terms of the rates for medical interventions. Under the case rate payment system, PhilHealth will reimburse a fixed rate for a specific illness/case, which will cover the fees of health care professionals and the use of hospital facilities. This improves the turn-around time for the processing of claims which translates to faster reimbursements.

Several lawmakers disagreed with Pargas saying that the case rate system has provided ways for PhilHealth officials and some healthcare institutions to commit fraudulent acts.

Rep. Defensor cited several Commission on Audit reports from 2014 to 2018 all of which said that the system was not favorable to PhilHealth and the government. Rep. Defensor also said that the case rate payment system has allowed the reimbursement of claims from even unaccredited healthcare providers. This resulted in the large discrepancy in the case data between the Department of Health and the PhilHealth.

Many of the Members also opined that the billions of pesos in losses incurred by PhilHealth due to overpayments and fraud provide enough grounds for the filing of plunder cases against the agency's key officials.

Pargas maintained that overpayments constituted only 22% of the cases while the remaining 78% were cases which were underpaid. He insisted that PhilHealth's worsening actuarial situation is largely due to the pandemic which resulted in a large reduction in member-contributions and higher benefit payouts.

Rep. Stella Luz Quimbo (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Marikina City) surmised that if hospitals are at the losing end, with 78% of the cases being underpaid, they may look for ways to recoup their losses, one of which is to collude with PhilHealth officials to file fraudulent claims. Rep. Quimbo stressed that the problem in PhilHealth lies not in the case rate payment system itself but in its failure to properly compute the appropriate rate for each illness/case and its weak system for monitoring and detecting fraud.

Rep. Janette Garin (1<sup>st</sup> District, Iloilo) alleged that high-ranking officials of PhilHealth, including Pargas, are involved in corruption in PhilHealth. She said that during her stint as Health Secretary, she instituted reforms to clean PhilHealth of scalawags but these were not continued after her term. Among these are the review of the case rates and the implementation of the "stop payment" scheme, which automatically cuts off PhilHealth reimbursements to health care institutions that have red flags.

Asked if he believes corruption is occurring within PhilHealth, Pargas declined to comment, saying that the allegations are already being investigated. But he said that PhilHealth remains committed to cleaning its ranks of unscrupulous individuals.

Several PhilHealth officials present during the meeting as well as those attending via Zoom were asked by Deputy Speaker Luis Raymund "LRay" Villafuerte Jr. (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Camarines Sur) if they are willing to sign bank secrecy waivers which would allow the Anti-Money Laundering Council (ALMC) to check their bank records. They answered in the affirmative.

Continuation... Public Accounts jt. w/ Good Government and Public Accountability		The Committee Secretariat was directed to issue a show-cause order to several PhilHealth officials including its President and CEO Ricardo Morales, Executive Vice President Arnel de Jesus, and Senior Vice President for Legal Sector Atty. Rodolfo del Rosario Jr. to explain why they should not be cited for contempt for either failing to attend the meeting or leaving the meeting without the permission of the Joint Committee. Likewise, the Committee will issue <i>subpoena duces tecum</i> to compel the PhilHealth officials to submit a copy of their Statements of Assets and Liabilities (SALN).
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SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING ON HOUSE MEASURES				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Sports (Youth and Sports Development)	Draft Substitute Bill to HB 4594	Rep. Torres- Gomez	Institutionalizing the Philippine National Games (PNG) and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Alberto Pacquiao (Party-List, OFW FAMILY), approved the draft Substitute Bill to HB 4594 subject to style and amendment. The substitute bill will be presented to the mother Committee for its consideration in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Lucy Torres-Gomez (4<sup>th</sup> District, Leyte), author of HB 4594, said that her bill seeks to decentralize the conduct of the national games in the country by providing a wide selection of athletes that will include both in-school and out-of-school youth, as well as professional athletes. She said the Palarong Pambansa and other local sports competitions will serve as preparatory sports programs for the PNG. Close coordination among the following agencies will also be required for the successful implementation of the proposed law: Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of National Defense (DND), Philippine Sports Commission (PSC), Philippine Olympic Committee (POC), National Sports Associations (NSAs), and the local government units (LGUs).</p> <p>Among the amendments to the draft substitute bill that were approved by the Subcommittee during the meeting were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change the title of the bill to "Institutionalizing the Philippine National Games (PNG) and appropriating funds therefor";</li> <li>• Create the PNG Board to be composed of the Executive Secretary as Chair; the DILG Secretary as Vice Chair; the PSC Chair as Secretary General; and the heads or representatives of the Department of Education (DepEd), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), AFP and POC as members. The PNG Board shall serve as the policy-making and advisory body instead of mandating the PSC with the sole authority to govern and supervise the conduct of the PNG;</li> <li>• Remove the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) as member of the Local Sports Council;</li> </ul>

Continuation... Sports (Youth and Sports Development)				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require PNG participants to be Filipinos by birth and those residing outside of the Philippines but are of Filipino ancestry; and</li> <li>• Provide PSC an annual budget of P180 million under the General Appropriations Act (GAA) for the implementation of the proposed law.</li> </ul>
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AGENCY BRIEFING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
<b>Visayas Development</b>	<p>Briefing on the development plans and programs for Regions VI, VII, and VIII under the new normal by the following agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)</li> <li>• Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)</li> </ul>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Vincent Franco "Duke" Frasco (5<sup>th</sup> District, Cebu), listened to the briefing conducted by several agencies on the development plans and programs for Regions VI, VII, and VIII under the new normal.</p> <p>DPWH Assistant Secretary Antonio Molano Jr. informed the body that for FY 2021, the DPWH will give priority to the construction of quarantine centers in Regions VI, VII, and VIII. As of now, the DPWH is in the process of identifying the locations where the additional quarantine centers will be constructed. It is also preparing the detailed engineering design of the other infrastructure projects for 2021. Included in the program of work are health protocols that will be strictly followed in the implementation of DPWH infrastructure projects.</p> <p>Molano added that the Department of Education has already submitted to the DPWH the list of school buildings for the latter's validation. Further, Molano said that the list of farm-to-market roads for FY 2021 under the convergence program of the DPWH has been completed.</p> <p>The DPWH Regional Directors for Regions VI, VII, and VIII outlined the priority projects in their respective regions for FY 2021, including the construction of quarantine centers. These quarantine centers, according to the Regional Directors, will be managed and maintained by local government units upon completion.</p> <p>Replying to the query of Rep. Manuel Sagarbarria (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Negros Oriental), Molano explained that only 50% of the funds under the "for later release" (FLR) item in the budget will be utilized within the year and the balance will be released next year. Explaining further, he said that projects falling under the FLR, as stated in the FY 2020 General Appropriations Act, which are not funded within the year will be included in the FY 2021 budget. Molano said that part of the FLR funds for 2020 was utilized for COVID-19 related projects.</p> <p>Rep. Vicente "Ching" Veloso III (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Leyte) noted that no quarantine center is programmed for his district. Rep. Veloso stressed the need to provide a quarantine facility in his area to accommodate returning locally stranded individuals (LSIs) and repatriated overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) during the required 14-day quarantine period upon arrival in the province.</p> <p>Molano assured Rep. Veloso that the DPWH will provide funding for a quarantine center in his district.</p> <p>DSWD Assistant Secretary Joyce Niwane made a report on the status of fund utilization for the following programs in the three regions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Amelioration Program (SAP) - Region VI has disbursed 98% of the allocated amount for the first (P2.65 billion) and second (P4.25 billion) tranches; Region VII has disbursed 97% of the allocated amount for the first tranche</li> </ul>

<p>Continuation... Visayas Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission on Higher Education (CHED)</li>   <li>• Land Transportation and Franchising Regulatory Board (LTFRB)</li> </ul>	<p>(P7.48 billion) and 77% for the second tranche (P 4.760 billion); Region VIII has disbursed 95% of the allocated amount for the first tranche (P 3.774 billion) and 83% for the second tranche (P 466.986 million)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Pension Fund (SPF) - Region VI, P1.09 billion; Region VII, 813.43 million; and Region VIII, P1.66 billion</li> <li>• Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (A/CS) – Region VI, P198.13 million; Region VII, P 151.87 million; and Region VIII, P69.57 million</li> <li>• Supplementary Feeding Program (SFP) - Region VI, P187.36 million; Region VII, P 212.29 million; and Region VIII, P 80.08 million</li> <li>• Senior Citizen Pension Fund – Region VI, P13.1 million; Region VII, P8.8 million; and Region VIII, P 3.3 million</li> </ul> <p>CHED Region VI, VII, and VIII Directors presented their plans and programs during the COVID-19 pandemic, which are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training of higher education faculty on the new teaching modalities under the new normal;</li> <li>• Training of higher education non-teaching personnel;</li> <li>• Promotion of mental health awareness among students;</li> <li>• Continuous access to quality tertiary education amidst border/quarantine restrictions;</li> <li>• Implementation of practicum/on the job training under the new normal;</li> <li>• Online processing and issuance of government authority, institutional recognition, certifications, and special orders;</li> <li>• Off site monitoring and evaluation of higher education institutions' academic programs in compliance with CHED policies, standards and guidelines; and</li> <li>• Implementation of safety measures and alternative courses of actions in operating under the new normal condition.</li> </ul> <p>LTFRB Region VIII Director Gualberto Gualberto reported that for the safety of its employees, the LTFRB has conducted regular disinfection of the workplace, facilitated the testing of employees for COVID-19, and adopted a skeletal and work-from-home work arrangements, among others.</p> <p>To ensure the safety of the commuting public, Gualberto said that the LTFRB is strictly implementing and monitoring the guidelines for public transportation under the general community quarantine (GCQ) and the modified GCQ. The agency is also using online platforms to facilitate transactions and to conduct webinars with stakeholders.</p> <p>Rep. Frasco inquired how the LTFRB Region VII office can help the 11,000 jobless jeepney drivers in Cebu province because of the lockdown.</p> <p>LTFRB Region VII Assistant Regional Director Reynaldo Elnar said that his office has been issuing special permits to public utility jeepneys allowing them to ply their route.</p>
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