

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## DepEd slates medical and dental missions for public school children

The Department of Education (DepEd) holds medical and health missions in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class municipalities nationwide during the Christmas season that is expected to benefit over two million Grade 1 to Grade 6 pupils.

From December 17- 21, 2007, selected pupils will receive services from doctors, nurses, dentists and other medical professionals in their school districts. The chosen recipients include children with disabilities, street and working children, children of poor families in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class municipalities, children in calamity-affected areas and children who belong to the indigenous people.

The health and dental missions are part of the DepEd's outreach program nationwide entitled, "Tuloy ang Pasko ng Mga Bata."

The project aims to brighten the holiday season of children in the poorest communities of the country. It also seeks to encourage the community to share their resources to children in need.

"The state of health and nutrition of our students has a direct bearing on their capability to learn" Education Secretary Jesli Lapus said.

One major factor that causes increase in drop-out rates, despite growing investments in education, is the poor state of health and nutrition of children, specifically, those at Pre-school and Grade 1-3 levels.

Lapus added, "We have expanded the Universal Medical and Dental Check-up to examine all pre-schools, Grades 1 to 6 pupils and secondary students, including personnel in public schools."

The universal medical and dental check-ups have also been included in DepEd's Adopt-A-School Program. In this program, members of the Philippine College of Physicians, the Philippine Medical Associations, the Philippine Dental Association and other health professional organizations have pitched in to smoothly carry out the programs.

Simultaneous to the health and dental missions, DepEd will also distribute packs of groceries, educational toys, school supplies and reading materials. The Schools District Supervisor will be primarily responsible in determining who will be the recipients.

Although the gift-giving program is partially funded by the DepEd units, canteen funds and PTCA, there will be support from the local government units and other private groups to benefit more students. **END**

PRESS RELEASE