

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DepEd health and nutrition personnel to get hazard pay benefits

Health and nutrition personnel of the Department of Education (DepEd) will receive Hazard Pay benefits according to their salary grade retroactive CY2007.

DepEd Secretary Jesli Lapus has issued DepEd Order No. 82 series of 2007 directing central office finance officers, regional directors and schools division superintendents to provide the hazard pay of the public health workers. Those with Salary Grade 1 to 19 are entitled 25% of their actual present salary while those with Salary Grade 20 and above shall receive no more than P4,989 a month.

Lapus noted, "Health and nutrition personnel's entitlement to hazard pay is in consideration of the nature of their work, which exposes them to low to high risk areas or workplaces as they provide health services to school populace."

A number of these personnel are assigned in provinces identified by the Department of Health as vector – infested with malaria (26 highly endemic provinces) filarial (17 affected provinces and 23 suspected provinces), schistosoma (28 provinces) and capillaria, to name a few.

"In times of calamities or emergencies, these personnel are in the forefront rendering basic health and nutrition services, and their direct contact with the children, teachers and non-teaching personnel, not to mention their interface with parents during home visitation, highly expose them to risks," stressed the DepEd chief.

The DepEd Order is in pursuant to Republic Act 7305 (RA 7305) entitled "Magna Carta of Public Health Workers."

RA 7305 aims to promote and improve the social and economic well-being of the health workers, their living and working conditions and terms of employment. It is intended to develop their skills and capabilities in order that they will be more responsive and better equipped to deliver health projects and programs. Likewise, the law encourages those with proper qualifications and excellent abilities to join and remain in government service.

Since the RA 7305 was issued in 1994, the DepEd public health workers have started receiving subsistence and laundry allowance every month. The Department currently employs around 4,000 health workers.

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The Department recognizes that DepEd health and nutrition personnel at the central, regional and division field offices are public health workers that face occupational hazards similar to the public health workers engaged in health-related work wherever they are located.

“It is expected that granting of Hazard Pay benefits will uplift the morale of our hardworking health personnel who choose to work in the country amidst prevailing lure of opportunities overseas,” Lapus said.

He added, “We are fully aware of the direct relationship between good health and academic performance, and the importance and relevance of the services of the public health workers towards better health and nutrition to reduce drop-out rates of our students.”

Director Thelma Santos of DepEd’s Health and Nutrition Center has affirmed that this benefit has been well-received by DepEd health workers.

In related development, DepEd remains focused in improving the teachers’ living standard by means of monetary and non-monetary benefits. In 2007, DepEd settled almost P3.4 billion pesos in unpaid insurance and health premiums of its employees.

In its year-end report, DepEd stated that in 2007 it paid some P1.7 billion in arrears representing government shares in GSIS contribution. The arrears were a result of the increase in GSIS premium from 9.5% to 12% for the period of July 1997 to December 1998.

Another P862 million was released to cover employees’ compensation insurance premium adjustments when the government insurance agency increased the premium from P30 to P100.

Meanwhile, P400 million were released last year to partially settle unpaid loyalty pays, step increments and other entitlements of DepEd personnel especially teachers. DepEd field offices are already reconciling records for any other unpaid obligations.

DepEd has also released P388 million to cover PhilHealth premium adjustments. The government health insurance company increased its premium from P100 to P112.

END

For more information on the hazard pay benefits of the DepEd health and nutrition personnel, please call Director Thelma Santos of DepEd’s Health and Nutrition Center at 637-5504.

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