

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Filipino doctors, dentists, and accountants can soon practice in ASEAN countries

Education Secretary Jesli A. Lapus said that an agreement has been forged among ASEAN member countries to allow Filipino doctors and dentists to practice their profession in other ASEAN countries. A similar agreement for Certified Public Accountants (CPA) is also being negotiated.

Lapus, who is vice chairman of the ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting, made the statement at the sidelines of the annual conference of ASEAN education ministers held recently in Phuket, Thailand.

He said that the Mutual Recognition Arrangements on Medical Practitioners and Dental Practitioners and a Framework Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Accountancy Services have been signed by ASEAN members to allow the free movement of professionals/skilled labor in the region. The signing of the Mutual Recognition Arrangements is one of the steps to build a true ASEAN Community by 2015.

“The signing of these agreements means that our doctors, dentists and later on certified public accountants may be recognized and practice in other ASEAN countries and vice versa. This translates to a bigger market for our professionals and greater opportunities for employment and professional training,” he said.

“We welcome these developments because these are concrete steps to realize a true ASEAN community that is inclusive, harmonious, and borderless and one that expands the opportunities for personal growth and development for our countrymen,” he added.

The agreements, which will be effective in August this year, provides that Filipino doctors and dentists may apply for recognition in another ASEAN country if he has: (1) valid professional license from the Professional Regulation Commission; (2) has been in active practice as a general Medical Practitioner or Specialist or Dentist for not less than five continuous years in the Philippines; (3) has no pending administrative or criminal case in relation to the practice of his profession; and (4) complies with such requirements as may be imposed by the host country.

If the professional satisfies these conditions, he shall be recognized as qualified to practice in the host country. However, he shall at all times be bound by the domestic laws, regulations and the Professional and Ethical Codes of Conduct and standards of medical and dental practice imposed by the host country.

The agreements also calls for the establishment of ASEAN Joint Coordinating Committees on Medical and Dental Practitioners composed of representatives from each ASEAN Member State to facilitate the implementation of the agreements in each country and to develop strategies for the full implementation of the accords.

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“Our professionals can definitely benefit from these agreements as they would strengthen their professional capabilities and promote the flow of information, exchange of expertise and best practices suited to the specific needs of ASEAN member states” said Lopus.

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