

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 14, 2009

Rural public schools welcome 5,000 new nurses

Some 5,000 new nurses will be deployed in rural public schools this October to improve delivery of healthcare services and provide jobs among unemployed nurses through the Project Nurses Assigned in Rural Schools (Project NARS).

This is a follow-through to an earlier program called Project: Nurses Assigned in Rural Service (Project NARS), which was launched by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in February 2009.

Project NARS is a training-cum-employment program implemented by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the Department of Health (DOH) and the Professional Regulation Commission, Board of Nursing (PRC-BON).

In Project: NARS, the first batch of some 5,000 registered nurses were deployed in 1,000 poorest municipalities nationwide. Five nurses were deployed in each selected municipality. Nurses who had completed a three-month rotation in rural health units and another three months in hospitals last September were given a monthly stipend of P8,000.

In the second batch, President Arroyo instructed the DOLE to modify the project in such a way the participants would act as roving nurses in district schools. The general orientation of the Batch II nurses is slated on October 15-16, 2009.

Education Secretary Jesli Lopus stressed that improving health and nutrition services in schools is key to the attainment of the department's goal of making quality education accessible to all Filipinos as provided in the millennium development goals. "These new nurses will surely bring us closer to our goal of providing our public schools access to basic health care," Lopus added.

It is estimated that there is one nurse for every 5,000 students.

DepEd has developed the modules to assist registered nurses who will participate in Project NARS. The training will provide nurses with competencies that will make them "warrior of wellness" within the school population, primary health care, school nutrition, infection control, first line diagnosis, immunization and health education, etc.

"These nurses will conduct school visitations and provide preventive and remedial measures for simple and common ailments among the school population," added the DepEd chief.

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Other tasks include providing individual health and nutrition assessment/examination, deworming activities and rendering first aid treatment. They are also slated to conduct screening procedures like vision test and hearing test.

Lapus added that these nurses will help the department intensify health education in the classroom giving emphasis on personal hygiene, proper hand washing, tooth brushing, eating of balance diets/proper nutrition and environmental sanitation.

School children, parents and teachers will benefit from the project as nurses will help in the information campaign in schools on the prevention of influenza Ah1n1 and other emerging diseases.

Deployment of the nurses is expected to improve delivery of health services in the rural areas. It will also create a pool of nurses trained to respond to the needs of schools thereby raising their employability.

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