

Newsbits

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Nurses' group demand salary increase as mandated by law

MANILA, (PNA) — A nationwide group of nurses has asked for the implementation of their salary increase which is mandated under Republic Act 9173 or the Nursing Act of 2002.

Philippine Nurses Association (PNA) president Dr. Leah Samaco Paquiz said since RA 9173 was enacted in 2002 the salaries of nurses should have been not lower than salary grade 15.

"This is clear in Section 32 that "in order to enhance the general welfare, commitment to service and professionalism of nurses, the minimum base pay of nurses working in public health institution shall not be lower than salary grade 15," Paquiz said in a statement.

She said nurses who work in hospitals in the Philippines remain to be underpaid despite the Nursing Law which says that a nurse in the government should be receiving a monthly salary of P16,093.00.

However, she said, some nurses are still way below the said legal monthly salary as reports reaching her office bared some are receiving less than P10,000 of monthly income.

She pointed out that while salary is not the reason why nurses serve, she recognizes that the foreign employment becomes more attractive to these nurses, who would have loved to serve Filipinos if only they can be paid justly.

Paquiz asserts that many nurses are not intending to go abroad and would love to serve, but are discouraged by the very low salary they are getting from the workload that are given them.

"We need to entice these nurses to work in public health and in government service by this simple request to provide them what is just and legal," he added.

While Paquiz admitted that nurses do not intend to rally or boycott their post, she called on the government to immediately settle the matter to entice more nurses to stay and work in hospitals.

"But let us not wait for the time that they all leave to work abroad even if in their hearts, they love to serve the Filipinos," she said. (PNA)

Puerto Princesa wins anew "Outstanding Local Government Unit" award

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY, Sept. 18 (PNA) -- Puerto Princesa City has garnered another major award, winning as an Outstanding Local Government Unit (Highly Urbanized City category) in the country for the 2008 National Literacy Awards Coordinating Council of the Department of Education.

This was informed by Servillano Arzaga, city schools division superintendent, in his letter to Mayor Edward Hagedorn. Arzaga said the award is credited to the good policies, programs and projects of Hagedorn.

One of the projects in improving the standard of education in the city is the Proyekto Asenso (Abanta sa Edukasyon na Susulong sa Organisasyon) that was started in 1998.

The project aims to teach all out-of-school-youths and indigenous children and their families to read, write, count and make good decisions for themselves and to be active members of the community. The other education projects are the alternative learning system, Tuloy Aral Walang Sagabal, Practical Skills Development, Unlad Kabataan, Early Childhood Education, Special Education Fund, Multi-Grade Program, Muslim Filipino Basic Education, Student Assistance Program, Special Program for Employment of Students, City Public Montessori, Residential Program for OSY, Local Youth Development Council and program in support to gifted children.

The award will be given during the annual National Literacy Conference and Awards to be held in Teacher's Camp, Baguio City in celebration of DepEd's Literacy Week on September 17-19.

Puerto Princesa, under the leadership of Hagedorn, has harvested several major awards, namely; Earth Day, "Hoy! Gising", Best Local Government Unit; Macli-ing Dulag Environmental Achievement; Gantimpalang Panglingkod (GALING-POOK) for Bantay Puerto Program; Award of Excellence: Cleanest and Greenest Component City of the Philippines; Best Tourist Destination; Peace Award; Commerce and Conscience;

Cleanest Inland Body of Water, Region IV, Nutrition Green Banner; Award of Excellence: Cleanest and Greenest Component City of the Philippines; Most Outstanding Performer of the Year; Best City Police Station; Management Awards of Asia (for Development Management); Gawad Pamana ng Lahi (Heritage Award); Likas-Yaman Awards for Environmental Excellence; Gantimpalang Panglingkod (GALING-POOK) for: The Oplan Linis Program; The City Satellite Hospitals; and The City Satellite Libraries; Most Active Proponent of Coastal Clean-up, 1996, Hall of Fame Award (Regional Clean and Green); Global 500 Roll of Honour Award (United Nations Environment Programme) and Hall of Fame Award (Asian Institute of Management). (PNA)

Dengue cases presently lower compared to same period in 2007 - DOH

MANILA, Sept. 19 (PNA) — Despite the reported alarming rise of dengue cases this year, the Department of Health (DOH) said the updated total number of cases admitted in hospitals this year is still lower compared to the same period in 2007.

In its latest dengue surveillance report, the DOH said a total of 23,250 dengue cases were admitted in different sentinel hospitals nationwide from January 1 to August 9, 2008.

The report said the cases are lower than 4.7 percent compared to the 24,299 recorded during the same period last year. Presently, there have been 236 deaths compared to the 245 in the same period of 2007. Region 7 posted the highest number of deaths with 75; followed by the National Capital Region (NCR) with 48; Region 3 with 27; Region 4-A with 20; and Region 1 with 14 deaths.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III said the total number of cases could have been much lower if the public vigilantly followed the 4-S anti-dengue campaign of the government which includes search and destroy; seek early consultation; self-protective measures and say 'no' to indiscriminate fogging.

According to the report, NCR posted the highest number of cases with 7,473; followed by Region 3 with 2,674; Region 4-A, 2,238; Region 7, 2,234; Region 11, 1,642; and Region 9, 1,534.

Duque said NCR has the highest number as the cluster of cases has been reported in several barangays in Metro Manila.

The statistics also showed the of dengue cases in NCR has a 182.9 percent increase compared to the 2,642 cases during the same period last year.

Quezon City has the highest number of cases with 1,812; followed by Manila with 1,537; Kalookan, 1,038; Valenzuela with 523; Pasig, 384; Navotas, 326; and Taguig with 294 cases.

The DOH has alerted local government units (LGUs) in Metro Manila on rise of dengue cases this year.

Duque also reminded health departments of LGUs to be rigid on the promotion of the 4-S against dengue campaign to the barangay level.

'Dengue cases are predicted to rise in the following months and there is a need for heightened alert due to the worldwide phenomena of global warming,' he said.

He also said residents should observe the 'Operation Taob' reminder which directs them to turn over empty bottles, cans, vases and other objects which can store water and become breeding places for dengue mosquitoes.

'We should treat every dengue case especially every death as alarming and work hard for the disease's prevention,' said Duque. (PNA)

Death toll rises to four in tainted baby formula scandal in China

BEIJING, (PNA/Xinhua) -- The death toll in the contaminated baby formula scandal has risen to four in China, with the death of a baby in northwestern Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, local authorities said on Thursday.

The latest death was at a hospital in the Mongolian Autonomous Prefecture of Bayingolin, the Xinjiang Autonomous Regional Health Department said on its website (www.xjwst.gov.cn), but no more details were given about the victim.

In addition, 86 babies in the region had fallen ill after drinking the milk powder tainted with the chemical melamine, which was believed to have helped to increase protein content, the department said.

About 10.3 tons of baby milk powder produced by the dairy giant Sanlu Group had been pulled off shelves in the region, it said.

The scandal has also claimed the lives of three other babies, including two in northwestern Gansu Province and one in eastern Zhejiang Province.

The dairy giant Sanlu based in the Hebei provincial capital Shijiazhuang in north China was the first company exposed in the tainted milk powder scandal. It is 43 percent owned by New Zealand dairy company Fonterra and has been ordered to halt all its production lines.

Tian Wenhua, the sacked board chairwoman and general manager of Sanlu, has been detained by police for questioning.

Nationwide, more than 6,200 infants had developed kidney stones after drinking Sanlu's tainted baby formula, Health Minister Chen Zhu told reporters on Wednesday.

The State Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine had carried out test samples involving 491 batches of products sold by all 109 companies that produced baby milk powder in the country. The inspectors found melamine in 69 batches of baby milk powder produced by 22 companies.

To date, 18 suspects in Shijiazhuang had been arrested. Six were charged with selling melamine, while the other 12 were dealers suspected of selling contaminated milk to Sanlu, said Shi Guizhong, spokesman for the Hebei Provincial Public Security Department, on Thursday at a press conference.

On Wednesday the mayor of Shijiazhuang Ji Chuntang resigned as a result of the scandal.

Earlier on Tuesday, four officials in the city were fired. They included Zhang Fawang, vice mayor in charge of agricultural production; Sun Renhu, the Shijiazhuang Municipal Animal Husbandry and Fishery Bureau director; Zhang Yi, Shijiazhuang Municipal Food and Drug Administration director; and Li Zhiguo, Shijiazhuang Municipal Bureau of Quality and Technical Supervision director. (PNA/Xinhua)