

DOLE Partnered with DOH to Address Concerns of Health Care Workers

The Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), consistent with principles of participatory governance and social dialogue, hold a dialogue with the NAGKAISA! Labor Coalition on 31 May 2021 via Zoom video conferencing to discuss the working conditions in the health sector as well as the implementation of statutory monetary benefits for health care workers (HCWs). DOLE Undersecretary Benjo Santos M. Benavidez and DOH OIC Assistant Secretary Maylene M. Beltran presided over the dialogue. Atty. Jose Sonny Matula, NAGKAISA! Labor Coalition's National President, and several hospital unions' presidents and officers participated in the dialogue.

In his opening message, DOLE Undersecretary Benavidez emphasized that dialogues, such as this, serve as a venue for the government to listen to its stakeholders and ultimately to come up with better and more responsive policies.

DOH OIC Assistant Secretary Beltran clarified that the grant of special risk allowance for HCW is governed by Presidential Administrative Order No. 36 and DOH-DBM Joint Circular No. 2. At the moment, determining entitlement to SRA depends on the certification from the hospital director. Nevertheless, the DOH fully supports the inclusion of other hospital workers who are part of the COVID-19 response in the provision for SRA under the proposed Bayanihan 3.

DOLE Undersecretary Benavidez also encouraged the Coalition to submit the list of hospitals it alleges to have or have been violating general labor standards and occupational safety and health standards for a more strategic conduct of labor inspections, taking into consideration the community quarantine restrictions and the health and safety of labor inspectors. Meanwhile, the DOH committed to coordinate with the appropriate Center for Health Development and DOH Regional Offices to fast-track the release of benefits, and to engage the labor sector in the budget planning to ensure transparency and accountability with respect to the implementation of statutory benefits for HCWs.

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