



PRESS RELEASE

21 October 2022

Group asks DOH to aggressively implement Mental Health Act

While they lauded the government for allotting more significant funding for mental health services in the Department of Health's 2023 national budget, a group of youth advocates for mental health demanded the full and concrete implementation of the Mental Health Act.

The administration of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has earmarked some P2.1 billion for the DOH's mental health programs, remarkably higher than last year's allocation of P568.04 million.

In 2021, the DOH reported that at least 3.6 million Filipinos faced mental health issues during the Covid-19 pandemic, including depression and mood disorders like bipolar disorder. It is also the third most common disability in the country.

"We are grateful that the DOH proposed bigger budget allocation for mental health projects and services. There is still a lot more to be done to address the country's mental health issues effectively," said Alyannah Lagasca, National Chairperson of Youth for Mental Health Coalition (Y4MH).

"Among them is the more concrete and stricter implementation of Mental Health Act, which could help many Filipinos deal with various mental health issues," Lagasca said, adding that the DOH should likewise be more proactive in promoting government services available for people who are suffering with mental health problems.

She stressed that the DOH has at its disposal billion of pesos in the budget to address the needs of persons with mental health challenges and could help change lives.

“In the course of promotions, we should also highlight that Mental health is also as important as physical health. We all know if someone is sick, regardless kung physical or mental health iyon, hindi siya productive. There goes all the socio-economic problems,” she said.

According to Ralph Degollacion of the Healthy Philippines Alliance (HPA), they were saddened by the lack of information dissemination on the part of the government regarding mental health.

“Last year, there was a P30-million budget allocation for information dissemination placed in one major TV network, but based on our monitoring, there was no single mental health awareness ad,” he said.

Degollacion said an aggressive implementation of the Mental Health Act is needed now considering that recent statistics show that the Covid-19 pandemic had a serious impact on the mental health situation of Filipinos, particularly the youth. He added that mental health services should be made accessible in more local government units (LGUs) in the country.