



PRESS RELEASE:

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Healthy Philippines Alliance to lawmakers: Now is the time to invest more on NCD prevention to stop rise of another epidemic

Healthy Philippines Alliance (HPA), a coalition of health focused and patient support organizations, has called on lawmakers to increase the Department of Health's proposed budget for 2023 that focuses on programs that can prevent and control the rise of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). NCDs, also known as chronic diseases, include cancers, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, chronic respiratory diseases, and mental health.

Out of its proposed P301-billion budget for 2023, the DOH initially requested P2.10 billion to fund efforts to combat NCDs, including providing mental health commodities to 362 access sites and cancer commodities to 31 access sites.

The DOH, during the Senate hearing on its proposed budget, requested for more additional funding for various programs, particularly P500 million for its cancer assistance fund as part of the implementation of the National Integrated Cancer Control Act of 2019, which serves as the framework for all cancer-related activities of the government.

"The Health Department's request for more funding for its NCD prevention programs should be granted, considering the significant increase of NCDs following the Covid-19 pandemic," Paul Mendoza of Healthy Philippines Alliance, said in a statement.

Based on the latest report released by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) on May 17, 2022, NCDs such as ischemic heart diseases,

cerebrovascular diseases, and neoplasms, commonly known as cancer, were the leading causes of death in the Philippines.

Jofti Villena, technical adviser of the HPA, added that the additional funding could boost the DOH's health promotion programs (in schools, workplaces, and communities), early screening to prevent escalation of NCDs (prevent hypertension, diabetes, and cancers), expansion of patient navigation, and greater access to affordable and lifesaving NCD medicines.

The HPA added that the additional budget for NCD prevention is long overdue, and it is the right thing to do now because treatment for chronic diseases are expensive and could lead to more Filipinos falling to poverty.

A coalition of health and patient organizations, HPA aims to address health inequities in the country's prevention and control of NCDs.

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