

**SENATE'S CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**  
**COMMENTS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BAYANIHAN TO HEAL AS**  
**ONE ACT (RA 11469)**

Department: **DSWD**

Program: **Social Amelioration Program (SAP)**

The emergency subsidy program has been repeatedly pointed out as one of the main features of the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act. It is intended to benefit 18M families that belong to either the poor or the informal sector, who are at risk of not earning a living during the Enhanced Community Quarantine. In this regard, the DOF and DBM announced that P100 Billion has been downloaded to DSWD. However, there were and continue to be many questions and issues related to the disbursements of the subsidy. These must be addressed urgently.

**Increasing the Number of Beneficiaries**

- Government should cover an additional 30% of the target beneficiaries of 18M families. This will bring the total number of beneficiaries to approximately 23.4M families, which is almost 95% of the total families in the country.<sup>1</sup>
- Increasing the number of beneficiaries will minimize the rigors and confusion in the determination of beneficiaries because the default now is that almost all affected citizens can avail of the benefit.<sup>2</sup>
- Increasing the number of beneficiaries will allow the agencies concerned to veer away from the tedious selection of targeted beneficiaries and, hence, avoid *exclusion errors* or inadvertent rejection of some who are qualified to claim the benefit.<sup>3</sup>
- The government can be less stringent and allow flexibility in the assessment of the beneficiaries, thus, the delivery of the cash assistance will be hastened.<sup>4</sup>

**Identification of Families/Beneficiaries**

- Is the subsidy given on a “per house basis” or “per family basis”? What if there are three families in one house, how should the subsidy be given?<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sen. Recto

<sup>2</sup> Sen. Recto

<sup>3</sup> Sen. Recto

<sup>4</sup> Sen Recto

<sup>5</sup> SP Sotto

- How about those who are just renting a house and are not registered voters in a certain locality, can they receive the subsidy assuming all the conditions are present?<sup>6</sup>
- RA 11469 aims to provide emergency subsidy to 18M low-income households or 73% of total families across the Philippines. However, it seems that the agencies tasked to implement the enhanced 4Ps have limited the target beneficiaries to less than the estimated number of poor families in the LGU. This system is susceptible to double counting and has been causing confusion to the public and even to several LGUs.<sup>7</sup>
- There is a huge disparity between the estimated number of beneficiaries provided by DOF/DSWD and the actual data provided by the LGUs. The estimated gap is within the range of 40%.<sup>8</sup>
- The predetermined number of beneficiaries as estimated by the DOF discriminates against those who are qualified but cannot be accommodated.<sup>9</sup>
- According to the LGUs, they have no idea what the basis of the DOF estimates are, since they were never consulted or even informed. And the estimates are far from the actual needs in their localities.<sup>10</sup>
- It appears that in the implementation of the social amelioration measures, the determination of the number of beneficiaries, based on the estimates, were done by the national government, i.e. DOF. It is therefore ridiculous that the actual data that is yet to be generated by the LGUs are already delimited by the figures imposed by the national agencies. With this absurd system, the true numbers of those who needed assistance from the government will never be actually determined.<sup>11</sup>
- A bottom-up approach should be adopted because the LGUs are the ones who are best suited to describe the conditions present in their respective localities, determine the actual needs of their constituents and ultimately the number of beneficiaries in their area of responsibility.<sup>12</sup> Allow the LGUs to gather the data and submit the same to the national government for vetting.<sup>13</sup>
- We should adopt a one-time payment scheme for the government's cash subsidy program. Under this system, the database to be used is the actual number of families in a barangay, as attested to and verified by the LGU concerned, and not the number of target beneficiaries based on the 2015 census. In this case, the number of families who are currently not included in the DSWD list, shall now receive financial aid from the government.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> SP Sotto

<sup>7</sup> Sen. Gatchalian

<sup>8</sup> Sen. Lacson

<sup>9</sup> Sen. Lacson

<sup>10</sup> Sen. Lacson

<sup>11</sup> Sen. Lacson

<sup>12</sup> Sen. Lacson

<sup>13</sup> Sen. Lacson

<sup>14</sup> Sen. Bato

### Limited number of Social Amelioration Cards (SACs)

- Inadequate SAC form given to CSWDs. Hence, selected families were given, and the constituents felt that the forms were not fairly distributed.<sup>15</sup>
- Reports have shown that in some barangays, the DSWD has limited the number of forms to be filled out to correspond to the DOF estimates as communicated to the local chief executives.<sup>16</sup>
- The LGUs should be given more responsibility and accountability in terms of distributing the SAC forms as well as distributing the cash subsidy to targeted beneficiaries since LGUs are more knowledgeable of the identity of the individuals and families residing within their respective jurisdictions.<sup>17</sup>

### Inadequate funds for the SAP

- Inadequate funds have been downloaded to the CSWD/Local DSWD. Hence, only a few families were given the needed subsidy. Constituents felt that there might be “favoritism” in the process of distribution of subsidy.<sup>18</sup>
- In some reported cases, Social Welfare and Development Office representatives tried to maximize the amounts given and divided the same so as to accommodate as many families as possible. By way of example, the standard amount per single beneficiary has been divided and shared by three qualified beneficiaries, one of them being the signatory to the amelioration form.<sup>19</sup>
- If needed, per the recommendation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the national government can increase its budget deficit by as much as 10% of the GDP to finance the funding for RA 11469.<sup>20</sup>
- It is recommended that the National Government’s allocation to LGUs for the SAP be increased from 50% (according to DOF) to 90%. The allocation to LGUs should be increased to 90% since only those belonging to the 10th decile have the capacity to pay for their basic food and non-food requirements.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> SP Sotto

<sup>16</sup> Sen. Lacson

<sup>17</sup> Sen. Gatchalian

<sup>18</sup> SP Sotto

<sup>19</sup> Sen. Lacson

<sup>20</sup> Sen. Recto

<sup>21</sup> Sen. Gatchalian

**Table 1. Average Savings per month of a Family by Income per Capita Decile (PhP)**

Income per Capita Decile	NCR	CAR	Region I (Ilocos Region)	Region II (Cagayan Valley)	Region III (Central Luzon)	Region IV-A (CALABARZON)	Region IV-B (MIMAROPA)	Region V (Bicol Region)
First Decile	802	298	713	65	738	862	248	339
Second Decile	1,575	423	798	323	1,115	1,503	573	496
Third Decile	1,625	688	1,115	277	1,238	1,734	610	386
Fourth Decile	2,115	1,034	1,366	448	1,710	1,792	894	529
Fifth Decile	1,794	1,048	(101)	786	1,667	2,462	717	1,324
Sixth Decile	2,009	1,924	669	25	1,913	2,283	675	1,210
Seventh Decile	2,544	2,007	914	1,483	1,313	1,884	823	1,203
Eighth Decile	2,074	1,367	1,242	1,704	533	1,120	1,495	994
Ninth Decile	5,131	1,499	3,255	1,685	2,111	2,563	1,819	2,276
<b>Tenth Decile</b>	<b>14,956</b>	<b>17,620</b>	<b>7,416</b>	<b>11,475</b>	<b>10,702</b>	<b>15,147</b>	<b>17,155</b>	<b>8,001</b>

Source: FIES 2018, PSA

### Communications with the LGUs

- The people are expecting immediate help but the government appears to be bogged down by guidelines including determination and supporting document requirements. LGUs will find it difficult to manage the expectations of the people if the identification of the beneficiaries will be selective.<sup>22</sup>
- The DSWD, DOTR, LTFRB, and Land Bank signed a Joint Memorandum Agreement on the emergency cash subsidy for drivers of Public Utility Vehicles (PUVs) but failed to coordinate with the LGUs. Programs of the National Government agencies, such as this, should be communicated and coordinated with the LGUs concerned to ensure that the efforts of the LGUs are aligned with the National Government agencies and there is no duplication of efforts.<sup>23</sup>

### Misinformation and Lack of Proper Information Dissemination

- There are misunderstandings as to who exactly the beneficiaries are. Fake news on this matter is really rampant.<sup>24</sup>
- Infographics on beneficiaries such as PWDs, Senior Citizens, solo parents, and others belonging to disadvantaged sectors, did not include the condition stated in the rules that they must be poor or from the informal sector and at risk of losing their livelihood.<sup>25</sup>
- Implementing agencies, in coordination with the LGUs, should conduct a massive, comprehensive, and effective communications strategy. The

<sup>22</sup> Sen. Recto

<sup>23</sup> Sen. Cayetano

<sup>24</sup> SP Sotto and Sen. Cayetano

<sup>25</sup> Sen. Cayetano

implementing agencies can get the help of television and radio networks by invoking the Responsibility to the Public provision in their franchises.<sup>26</sup>

- At the same time, misinformation in social media should be countered by an aggressive information campaign.<sup>27</sup>

### Monitoring and Transparency

- The DSWD should provide a more detailed report on the implementation of the program by providing the number of beneficiaries, areas covered, and the amount spent. By providing these relevant data, the government can identify the people who have not received assistance and determine the proper allocation of funds.<sup>28</sup>
- Both the national government implementing agencies and the LGUs should adopt a unified online public monitoring and transparency system. The system should report to the public the beneficiaries, the amount they received and the LGU where they are residing. Included also are the detailed report on the amount disbursed, the amount liquidated, and the administrative costs incurred both by the LGUs and national government implementing agencies.<sup>29</sup>
- The online system should be made public, where citizens can file complaints and reports. The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) can develop this web-based monitoring and transparency hub.<sup>30</sup>

### Other Observations

- There should be updates on other identified Social Amelioration Programs not mentioned in the Report, such as:<sup>31</sup>
  - Livelihood Assistance Grants,
  - Cash Assistance for Rice Farmers (Rice Farmer Financial Assistance)
  - Recovery Package for Micro and Small Enterprises Engaged in Agriculture and Fisheries Food Production,
  - other Supply Chain Activities in Accordance with the Agripreneurship Development Fund/Program of the Agricultural Credit Policy Council.
- The succeeding report should also cover updates on FNFI distribution in other regions.

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<sup>26</sup> Sen. Lacson and Sen. Cayetano

<sup>27</sup> Sen. Lacson

<sup>28</sup> Sen. Cayetano

<sup>29</sup> Sen. Lacson

<sup>30</sup> Sen. Lacson

<sup>31</sup> Sen. Gatchalian

Department: **DOH**  
Program: **COVID-19 Response**

Cohesive Action Plan

- All the international guidelines point to the need for effective contact tracing as part of a quarantine or community lock-down. How is our contact tracing coming along? Are LGUs equipped to do the tracing? Have training and clear guidelines been given? Are there any technological tools we can use to help us in contact tracing?<sup>32</sup>
- Are the few remaining public places that are open equipped with CCTV? Are ID's scanned so there is a record of the people who were in that place at a given time and can be used to expedite contact tracing. At the very least, shouldn't every person be asked to log every place they visit so when necessary the data can easily be traced.<sup>33</sup>
- The DOH should explain their plan of action and align the same with WHO's six key actions in addressing the current COVID-19 pandemic. This kind of information can give the people a sense of peace during this time of uncertainty.<sup>34</sup>
- The DOH should also research, keep abreast of studies, and access life saving drugs that are being explored as potential vaccines or cures for COVID-19 in other countries.<sup>35</sup>

Testing Kits and Accreditation of Laboratories

- There are now more testing kits and laboratories, but what is the target number of people to be tested, so as to be able to project the number of kits needed.<sup>36</sup>
- What about rapid testing? What is DOH's plan on the complementary use of rapid testing and PCR based tests?<sup>37</sup>
- The DOH should likewise continue to explore new technologies that will improve the efficiency and accuracy of testing.<sup>38</sup>
- The FDA reports that as of April 3, 2020, 276 (76%) of 363 applications for COVID-19 test kits certification are either disapproved or have pending requirements for compliance. We would like to be updated on the steps

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<sup>32</sup> Sen. Cayetano

<sup>33</sup> Sen. Cayetano

<sup>34</sup> Sen. Cayetano

<sup>35</sup> Sen. Zubiri

<sup>36</sup> Sen. Cayetano and Sen Villanueva

<sup>37</sup> Sen. Cayetano

<sup>38</sup> Sen. Cayetano

undertaken to encourage more applicants as well as support provided to those with pending requirements.<sup>39</sup>

- There are now some 10 laboratories around the country that have been accredited and DOH reports there will be more. However, we would like to emphasize the need to swiftly provide adequate testing centers or laboratories in other areas with the highest number of cases next to NCR, but do not have accredited testing laboratories yet: these are CALABARZON (215 cases), Central Luzon (75 cases), and Cagayan Valley (40 cases).<sup>40</sup>

### Procurement and Allocation of Medical Supplies and Equipment

- The purchase of additional PPEs and the local production of medical-grade PPEs by member companies of the Confederation of Wearable Exporters of the Philippines (CONWEP) are welcome developments, but cognizant of the world shortage on PPEs, it becomes all the more important for DOH to project the needs per hospital, coupled with prompt allocation and distribution to public and private hospitals, as required by the law.<sup>41</sup>
- The allocation and distribution should also include national- and LGU- run emergency isolation/quarantine areas.<sup>42</sup>

Department: **DOH, DSWD, PNP, and LGUs**

Program: **Women and Children and other Vulnerable Sectors**

### Special Concerns of Women and Children and Other Vulnerable Sectors

- Certain members of our communities, in addition to women and children, are even more vulnerable in times of crisis, such as this pandemic. The DOH should assist health care providers and facilities in ensuring that they have access to medication and health services.<sup>43</sup>
- The DOH must provide protocols on maternal care and childbirth during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>44</sup>
- According to the UN, reports from countries suggest that restrictions in movement and social isolation as well as other factors are leading to an increase in domestic violence. Thus, the LGUs, DSWD and the PNP should

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<sup>39</sup> Sen. Villanueva

<sup>40</sup> Sen. Cayetano and Sen. Villanueva

<sup>41</sup> Sen. Cayetano

<sup>42</sup> Sen. Cayetano

<sup>43</sup> Sen. Cayetano

<sup>44</sup> Sen. Cayetano and Sen. Pimentel

closely monitor possible incidents of violence at home and adopt measures to effectively address the same.<sup>45</sup>

### Mandatory Infants and Children Immunization

- DOH must ensure that infants and young children are getting vaccinated consistent with RA 10152 or the Mandatory Infants and Children Health Immunization Act of 2011. According to WHO, even a short-term interruption of immunization services may result in an outbreak of vaccine-preventable diseases. With already fragile health systems due to the strain caused by COVID-19, we cannot afford another outbreak of a disease that could have easily been prevented through vaccination.<sup>46</sup>

Department: **DTI, BOC, and DILG**

Program: **Supply Chain Management**

### Review of Current Guidelines

- Given that the ECQ has been extended, we should also be reviewing current regulations in place that could be essential to people staying at home, businesses still running, and businesses that are closed but minimizing losses.<sup>47</sup>
  - Re-evaluation of businesses that are considered essential or otherwise part of the supply chain (such as hardwares, office and school supplies, wellness products) that can be opened provided they comply with the usual safety measures recommended.<sup>48</sup>
  - What guidelines are there for online- and delivery- based businesses since this is clearly a safer option? <sup>49</sup>
  - As a source of income, can home-based online businesses that do not include staff reporting to work, be allowed and encouraged<sup>50</sup>
  - In connection with container loads of shipments in the ports, is there any effort or plan to release them especially for products that have shelf lives or sensitivity to heat?<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Sen. Cayetano

<sup>46</sup> Sen. Cayetano

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<sup>51</sup> Sen. Cayetano



- With respect to imported goods, a review of PPA fees and such other related charges to importers during the enhanced community quarantine is necessary.<sup>52</sup>
- Despite the assurance and initiative of concerned agencies, there are still reports of restricted movement in Ifugao and the Cordillera region in general. There are also reports that some LGUs are not following the guidelines and are hampering the movement of goods. As such, closer coordination and communication among the LGUs, DA, DILG, and the PNP are vital to ensure the flow of agricultural products.<sup>53</sup>
- There are reports of shortages of supplies for pharmaceutical packaging materials. Some pharmaceutical companies are even having difficulty with importation of medicines and supplies.<sup>54</sup>
- Others also complain that the 24-hour rule of the BOC is not being followed because importers who have multiple containers are still waiting for BOC clearance. For these reasons, we should look into whether BOC is able to implement the release of containers within 24 hours.<sup>55</sup>

Department: **DOTr**

Program: **Toll-Free Access**

*Toll-Free Access*

- It is recommended that operators of all expressways in Luzon should provide toll-free access to all motorists and not just to health workers, for the duration of the enhanced community quarantine. In addition, the absence of staff to man the toll booths for cash payments has caused unnecessary delay to motorists.<sup>56</sup>

Department: **DOF AND DOLE**

Program: **Assistance to MSMEs and their Workers**

*Assistance to MSMEs and Wage Subsidy for their Workers*

- We understand that the economic team is working on a subsidy/assistance program for MSMEs. This is welcome news considering that we want to continue to keep people at home so we can flatten the curve.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Sen. Pimentel

<sup>53</sup> Sen. Cayetano and Sen. Villanueva

<sup>54</sup> Sen. Cayetano

<sup>55</sup> Sen. Cayetano

<sup>56</sup> Sen. Villanueva and Sen. Pimentel

<sup>57</sup> Sen. Cayetano

- We also need to provide assistance to MSMEs even while the quarantine is in place, conditioned on the retention of their employees.<sup>58</sup>
- We may also need to increase the Php 1 Billion initial funding for the P3-Emergency Relief Fund, and to provide incentives for banks to lend more to MSMEs.<sup>59</sup>
- As for those employed by MSMEs, the calculation below pertains to the cost of wage subsidy for MSME workers. It's Php 53 billion if 100% wage subsidy; then Php 39.7 billion under 75% wage subsidy. Considering the huge cost, maybe we can start with a 30-50% subsidy first, with a corresponding increase if the duration of the ECQ is extended.<sup>60</sup>

Region	MSME Employment	Total Cost of Subsidizing Agri and Non-Agri Minimum Wage for 22 Working Days			
		100%	75%	50%	25%
National Capital Region (NCR)	1,621,685	19,156,517,402	14,367,388,052	9,578,258,701	4,789,129,351
CAR	88,753	683,398,100	512,548,575	341,699,050	170,849,525
Region I (Ilocos Region)	236,856	1,766,696,547	1,325,022,410	883,348,274	441,674,137
Region II (Cagayan Valley)	134,074	1,090,433,960	817,825,470	545,216,980	272,608,490
Region III (Central Luzon)	605,056	5,577,297,132	4,182,972,849	2,788,648,566	1,394,324,283
Region IV-A (CALABARZON)	824,283	7,243,105,144	5,432,328,858	3,621,552,572	1,810,776,286
Region IV-B (MIMAROPA)	110,874	780,552,960	585,414,720	390,276,480	195,138,240
Region V (Bicol Region)	191,111	1,303,377,020	977,532,765	651,688,510	325,844,255
Region VI (Western Visayas)	318,467	2,740,375,990	2,055,281,993	1,370,187,995	685,093,998
Region VII (Central Visayas)	449,775	3,995,731,080	2,996,798,310	1,997,865,540	998,932,770
Region VIII (Eastern Visayas)	140,269	970,285,470	727,714,103	485,142,735	242,571,368
Region IX (Zamboanga)	139,313	967,729,774	725,797,331	483,864,887	241,932,444
Region X (Northern Mindanao)	207,600	1,664,540,592	1,248,405,444	832,270,296	416,135,148
Region XI (Davao Region)	317,316	2,762,983,322	2,072,237,492	1,381,491,661	690,745,831
Region XII (SOCCSKSARGEN)	197,331	1,411,685,748	1,058,764,311	705,842,874	352,921,437
Region XIII (Caraga)	98,696	694,819,840	521,114,880	347,409,920	173,704,960
ARMM	32,803	233,179,650	174,884,738	116,589,825	58,294,913
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,714,262</b>	<b>53,042,709,731</b>	<b>39,782,032,298</b>	<b>26,521,354,866</b>	<b>13,260,677,433</b>

  

TOTAL Cost of Wage Subsidy for Workers in Agri- and Non-Agri MSMEs	
100%	53,042,709,731
75%	39,782,032,298
50%	26,521,354,866
25%	13,260,677,433

  

Author:	Office of Senator Joel Villanueva
Data Source	National Wages Productivity Commission (NWPC); DTI; 2018 List of Establishments (Philippine Statistics Authority)

<sup>58</sup> Sen. Villanueva

<sup>59</sup> Sen. Villanueva

<sup>60</sup> Sen. Villanueva

Department: **DOH, DILG, DPWH and LGUs**

Program: **Infirmary/Isolation Facilities**

*Identifying Possible Infirmary/Isolation facilities*

- DOH has reported that it has at least one COVID-19 referral hospital per region. Given the data on COVID-19 cases in the country, there is a need to increase the number of referral hospitals per region.
- As the national university hospital and one of first hospitals to be identified as a COVID-19 referral hospital, PGH should be tapped to assist in providing guidelines in the preparation of other COVID-19 designated hospitals around the country.<sup>61</sup>
- We understand that 12,324 barangays have already designated Barangay Isolation Units or Barangay Special Care Facilities that will house PUIs in their respective jurisdiction. This means that there are 29,721 remaining barangays that have not yet designated any isolation or special care facilities. We would like to know the efforts by DOH and DILG to assist LGUs with identifying or establishing isolation units, including targeted number of beds and needed medical supplies and equipment based on the population in that area. The DPWH shall likewise provide details on the distribution of the evacuation centers and facilities that have been converted.<sup>62</sup>

Department: **DOH, DENR and LGUs**

Program: **Proper Waste Disposal**

*Proper Waste Disposal of Masks and Other Hazardous/Medical Waste*

- Given the surge of used medical masks, tissues and other similar personal hygiene products, and evidence that the virus can remain active on surfaces for a number of days, are there guidelines for the proper and sanitary disposal of these items for both hospital and non-hospital settings?<sup>63</sup>
- If there are guidelines, were these announcements made known to the public so they are aware of how to properly dispose of such items?<sup>64</sup>
- Are new or special guidelines necessary for their disposal? These are potentially hazardous.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Sen. Cayetano

<sup>62</sup> Sen. Cayetano and Sen. Villanueva

<sup>63</sup> Sen. Cayetano

<sup>64</sup> Sen. Cayetano

<sup>65</sup> Sen. Cayetano

- There will be a surge in disposable and/or plastic items, not just during the period of enhanced community quarantine, but for the long-term, since the public may start using more single-use plastic items again for hygienic purposes. There should be a plan for this surge on plastic items. Campaigns to properly segregate at source should be intensified. Alternatives should be explored as well since we do not know how long this situation will last.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Sen. Cayetano