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SENATE
P. S. R. No. 1159

Introduced by Senator Maria Lourdes Nancy S. Binay

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND DEMOGRAPHY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE RESPONSE OR ACTION PLAN OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ON MONKEYPOX, A DISEASE DECLARED BY THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION AS A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY OF INTERNATIONAL CONCERN

WHEREAS, in a news release of the World Health Organization (WHO) last August 14, 2024, it was reported that WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has declared monkeypox (mpox) outbreak a public health emergency of international concern following an upsurge of mpox in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and a growing number of countries in Africa;

WHEREAS, according to the WHO, the mpox virus is an orthopoxvirus that causes mpox, a disease with symptoms similar to smallpox, although less severe. While smallpox was eradicated in 1980, mpox continues to occur in countries of central and west Africa. Since May 2022, cases have also been reported from countries without previously documented mpox transmission outside the African region;

WHEREAS, according to the WHO, common symptoms of monkeypox include fever, headaches, muscle pain and back ache, low energy, swollen lymph nodes, and rash with blisters on face, hands, feet, body, eyes, mouth, or genitals;

WHEREAS, the WHO has reported that the Department of Health (DOH) detected the first confirmed case of mpox in the country on July 29, 2022. The Philippines is the 8th country/area in the WHO Western Pacific Region to have reported confirmed cases of mpox;

WHEREAS, at the time, according to Dr. Graham Harrison, Officer-in-Charge of WHO Philippines, the DOH has been proactive towards preparedness, prevention, and response to mpox;

WHEREAS, according to news reports, on August 19, 2024, the DOH has announced that a new mpox case has been detected in the country, bringing the total cases to 10. The first case of mpox in the country for this year was detected last August 18, 2024 and the last case in December 2023;

WHEREAS, according to DOH, the case is a 33-year-old Filipino male with no travel history outside the Philippines but with close, intimate contact three weeks before symptom onset. His symptoms started more than a week ago with fever, which was followed four days later by findings of a distinct rash on the face, back, nape, trunk, groin, as well as palms and soles;

WHEREAS, according to the WHO, mpox spreads from person to person through close physical contact with someone who has a monkeypox rash, including through face-to-face, skin-to-skin, mouth-to-mouth or mouth-to-skin contact. This may include direct contact with the rash, or through hugging, kissing, or sexual contact;

WHEREAS, considering that the WHO has declared the recent MPOX outbreak a public health emergency of international concern, it is necessary to evaluate the readiness of the DOH's action plan or response to the spread of mpox in the country. It is vital that appropriate measures are in place to prevent or mitigate the impact of the disease and safeguard public health;

WHEREAS, it is likewise imperative for the Senate to look into the adequacy of the DOH's and other relevant agencies' response to the WHO guidance on mpox including public awareness strategies to provide recommendations on how to enhance the country's preparedness and response to mpox and similar public health threats.

RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, by the Senate of the Philippines, to direct the Senate Committee on Health and Demography to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the response or action plan of the Department of Health on monkeypox, a disease declared by the World Health Organization as a public health emergency of international concern

Adopted,



MARIA LOURDES NANCY S. BINAY