

FILIPINO NURSES SEEKING US JOBS DECLINES



According to statistics released by a lawmaker earlier in the month, fewer and fewer Filipinos are seeking nursing jobs in the United States. There were only 1,370 Filipinos who took the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX), which were issued from July to September of this year. The number dropped 38 percent from the 2,227 Filipinos who took the examination in the same time period in 2010. The United States National Council of State Boards of Nursing reported that only 4,354 Filipinos took the test for the first time between the months of January and September. "This represents a decline of 44 percent, or 3,426, compared to the 7,780 Filipino nurses who took the NCLEX for the first time over the same nine-month period in 2010," LPGMA party-list Rep. Arnel Ty said. "The US labor market for foreign nurses is shrinking. America itself is producing more nurses, and fewer healthcare service providers there are making new hires in light of continuing government subsidy cutbacks." Ty feels that the Philippines is still the largest provider of foreign nurses for the United States: "A total of 1,894 nurses educated in other countries such as India, South Korea, Canada and Puerto Rico had also taken the NCLEX-RN for the first time from January to September. A total of 17,589 nurses educated outside the US took the NCLEX (including repeaters) in the nine-month period, but only 27 percent of them passed the examination. In comparison, a total of 152,068 US-educated nurses took the NCLEX (including repeaters), and 84 percent of them passed," Ty said. As of March 31, the Professional Regulation Commission reports that there are 290,000 registered nurses without a job. The number does not include the 37,000 nursing graduates who passed the licensure test in July. Ty has submitted a bill to the government in order to create more nursing jobs in the country and to help nurses who are already qualified to find jobs either in the country, in the United States, or elsewhere around the world. House Bill 4582, if approved, will permit nurses to work a six-month tour of duty and would be compensated with a stipend that would not fall under the Salary Grade 15 that was put into effect back in 2002. Nurses can qualify for this position by being no older than 35 years of age and having a proper license for the position. The government of the Philippines plans to spend P1.686 on the program in order to expand the Department of Health's Doctors to the Barrio, helping nurses find jobs. Should the program be put into effect, more than 12,000 nurses and 1,000 new midwives would be placed strategically in underprivileged areas. The program, if continued annually, would mobilize more than 10,000 nurses per year in the country to help with those underprivileged areas of the Philippines.

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