

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

House Joint Resolution No. 40



INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVES ALAN PETER “COMPAÑERO” S. CAYETANO, MARIA LAARNI L. CAYETANO, RANEO E. ABU, DAN S. FERNANDEZ, MICHAEL T. DEFENSOR, AND JOSE ANTONIO “KUYA” R. SY-ALVARADO

**JOINT RESOLUTION
STRONGLY URGING THE INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES (IATF) TO IMMEDIATELY ADMINISTER BOOSTER OR ADDITIONAL CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) VACCINE DOSES TO THE FRONTLINE HEALTHCARE WORKERS AND THE IMMUNOCOMPROMISED**

WHEREAS, Section 15, Article II of the 1987 Constitution mandates the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people;

WHEREAS, there has been a recent spate of COVID-19 cases in the country, hitting a record of 22,415 positive cases on 06 September 2021, surpassing the previous all-time high of 22,366 cases last 30 August 2021;

WHEREAS, at the same period, the Department of Health (DOH) also reported the fourth consecutive day of more than 20,000 new infections confirmed daily, expecting the number to continue rising in the coming weeks because of the Delta variant. The DOH said that three out of every four Filipinos getting infected with COVID-19 are now caused by the Delta variant;

WHEREAS, the Delta variant is more contagious, with some studies suggesting patients infected with the Delta variant were more likely to be hospitalized than patients infected with Alpha or the original virus that causes COVID-19;

WHEREAS, healthcare workers providing frontline health services are constantly exposed to the virus while they perform their duties, even more so with the surge in cases because of emerging variants. As of 31 August 2021, there have been 23,611 healthcare workers who have tested positive for COVID-19 based on the World Health Organization’s Situation Report on the Philippines;

WHEREAS, it has been six (6) months since the government started inoculating frontline healthcare workers in March 2021. In a study conducted by Chinese researchers, antibodies triggered by Sinovac Biotech’s CoronaVac, which has been the most widely used COVID-19 vaccine brand in the Philippines, declined below a key threshold from around six months after a second dose for most recipients, but a third shot had a strong booster effect;

WHEREAS, even the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has recognized that “many vaccines are associated with a reduction in protection over time, and... that additional vaccine doses could be needed to provide long lasting protection;”

WHEREAS, it is important to provide healthcare workers vaccine booster doses in view of their role in maintaining critical health infrastructure operations and their increased risk of getting COVID-19 and spreading it to others;

WHEREAS, the United States' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) stated that immunocompromised persons are especially vulnerable to COVID-19 because they are more at risk of serious, prolonged illness and they may not build the same level of immunity to two-dose vaccine series compared to people who are not immunocompromised. Hence, the CDC recommends that people with moderately to severely compromised immune systems receive an additional dose of mRNA COVID-19 vaccine after the initial two doses, including people who have:

- Been receiving active cancer treatment for tumors or cancers of the blood
- Received an organ transplant and are taking medicine to suppress the immune system
- Received a stem cell transplant within the last 2 years or are taking medicine to suppress the immune system
- Moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency (such as DiGeorge syndrome, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome)
- Advanced or untreated HIV infection
- Active treatment with high-dose corticosteroids or other drugs that may suppress your immune response.

WHEREAS, in a Laging Handa public briefing, DOH Undersecretary Maria Rosario S. Vergeire noted that the Vaccine Experts Panel (VEP) of the DOH has “verbalized that booster shots can be administered to medical workers and immunocompromised individuals;”

WHEREAS, according to the CDC, an additional dose may prevent serious and possibly life-threatening COVID-19 in people who may not have responded to their initial vaccine series;

WHEREAS, neighboring countries with similar circumstances to ours have started providing booster/additional doses to their population. Indonesia has begun giving third shots to medical personnel and health workers who are fully vaccinated with CoronaVac, amid concerns over the latter's effectiveness against the more transmissible Delta variant.

WHEREAS, Thailand has started implementing the same, and even extended the coverage to the elderly, citizens with underlying diseases, and foreigners residing in high infection areas;

WHEREAS, similar policies were recently announced in Germany and France, which are offering boosters to older people and those with underlying health conditions;

WHEREAS, other countries will offer booster shots to their wider populations. The Czech Republic announced that it would offer a booster, beginning 20 September 2021, to anyone who had previously been vaccinated with either a single or double dose;

WHEREAS, several countries, including the United States, are now offering additional shots to immunocompromised people;

WHEREAS, it is vital to protect our healthcare workers, so that they may, in turn, take care of COVID-19 and non- COVID -19 patients. With hundreds of hospitals in the country nearing full capacity and our healthcare workers having to attend to more patients and extending working hours as a result of recent rise in positive cases, we cannot afford a further shortage of our health manpower as a result of our healthcare workers being infected with the virus;

WHEREAS, while we have vaccinated just a fraction of our population because of the inadequate supply of vaccines, protection of the frontline health workers and the immunocompromised is a moral imperative and a practical necessity to prevent the collapse of our healthcare system;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, by the House of Representatives and the Senate, to strongly urge the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases to immediately administer booster or additional COVID-19 vaccine doses to the frontline healthcare workers and the immunocompromised.

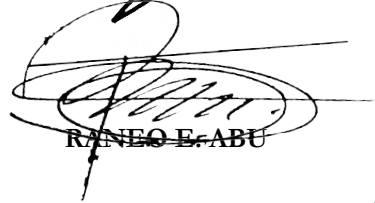
Adopted,



ALAN PETER "COMPAÑERO" S. CAYETANO



MARIA LAARNI L. CAYETANO



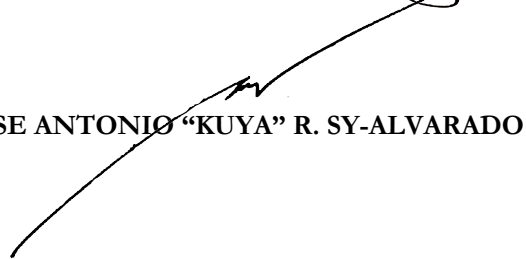
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