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**Media Release**  
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## **Doctors and Health Workers Outraged Over Arroyo's Health Policies**

Health professionals and hospital workers held a 10-minute noise barrage today at the Lung Center of the Philippines to express outrage over the difficulties brought about by Mrs. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

According to Health Alliance for Democracy (HEAD), both patients and health workers themselves have suffered from the numerous anti-people policies and programs of the Arroyo administration.

“The anger of health workers stems from government’s refusal to provide services to indigent patients, and its insistent denial of benefits that should be accorded to them under the Magna Carta of Health Workers,” said Sean Velchez, HEAD member and a nurse at the Philippine Orthopedic Center.

“In almost all public hospitals in Metro Manila, patients now have to pay for services that used to be given for free, while other fees have been raised, adding to the burden of costs.”

Moreover, even benefits that should be rightfully given to health workers are being denied under the colatilla of “subject to the availability of funds”.

“We are truly appalled at how this administration treats its own people: those who are sick and those who care for the sick,” Velchez added.

The health group denounced Mrs. Arroyo’s continued push for healthcare privatization.

“Under Mrs. Arroyo, healthcare has become a commodity afforded only by the rich.” Said Dr. Geneve Rivera, HEAD secretary-general, “Worse, even health professionals are treated as products for export.”

“They work under difficult conditions but are given paltry wages not commensurate to their labor. Who will not be forced to go abroad under such trying circumstances?”

According to Dr. Rivera, another example of healthcare privatization is the Philippine General Hospital, the erstwhile premier public hospital in the country.

“At PGH, indigent patients who use congressional funds are charged rates that are for private patients. Worse, this public hospital will have a purely private hospital inside, allegedly to run its medical arts building!”

“What is being done to our public hospitals? What will happen to our charity patients?”

The group vowed to continue exposing and opposing such anti-people policies. They will also join the People’s SONA on Monday, July 27, 2009 to voice out the true state of the people’s health. #####

**References:**  
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