



NATIONAL CITIZENS' MOVEMENT FOR FREE ELECTIONS (NAMFREL)

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PRESS STATEMENT

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DOH and NAMFREL renew commitment to transparency through the Medicine Monitoring Project



The Department of Health, through Honorable Secretary Enrique T. Ona, and NAMFREL, through its National Chairperson Jose L. Cuisia, Jr., signed today, August 9, 2010, a Memorandum of Agreement renewing their collaboration on the Medicine Monitoring Project (MMP). This is in line with the DOH's commitment to directly engage civil society organizations in upholding transparency in the procurement, delivery, and inventory of pharmaceutical products, supplies, equipment and infrastructure projects of the Department.

Through the MOA, DOH officially designates NAMFREL through the Coalition Against Corruption Program (CACCP) as one of the two observers in the composition of the Bids and Awards Committee of the DOH and all its retained hospitals and regional offices that will monitor the agency's procurement and delivery activities. The DOH will also make available for interviews all of its personnel concerned with the programs to be monitored, as well as provide all relevant information to the NAMFREL Project Team. NAMFREL in turn will mobilize its volunteers in the areas concerned, develop and provide training in the use of the monitoring tools and framework, strictly monitor the DOH's procurement activities, and present the findings of the monitoring to the public.

The partnership of NAMFREL and DOH started in 2004, when then-Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit and NAMFREL founding chairman Jose S. Concepcion, Jr., signed a commitment of

support and agreement for the MMP. The partnership was renewed in 2006, when then-Health Secretary Francisco Duque re-confirmed the DOH's commitment and support to the initiative of NAMFREL.

In 2005, over 1.7 billion pesos worth of DOH procurement items and services were successfully monitored under MMP. In 2006, after NAMFREL reported that there were hospitals that published incomplete bid ads, DOH issued an order to all hospitals and health offices to observe the provisions in the Government Procurement Reform Act of 2003. In the same year, after the discovery by NAMFREL volunteers of unadvertised procurement worth P11 million, the DOH, through its Integrity Development Committee (IDC), halted the said procurement and the bidding was declared a failure. The following year, volunteers endorsed a case of procurement irregularities to the office of the Ombudsman in the Visayas (the case remains active).

Due to its commitment to uphold transparency in its operations, the Department of Health has consistently ranked as the least corrupt agency in the Philippine government. ###