



NEWS RELEASE

DOH: No guarantee letters in gov’t hospitals with zero balance billing in effect

January 7, 2026

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Department of Health (DOH) Secretary Teodoro J. Herbosa clarified that it is not government policy to use guarantee letters issued by political figures for patients in DOH-run hospitals, as he thanked President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. for ensuring the continued full implementation of the zero balance billing program.

During a Malacañang Palace press briefing on Wednesday, Herbosa stressed that patients seeking treatment in DOH-run hospitals no longer need to solicit assistance from lawmakers or politicians.

“We do not really use guarantee letters. The DOH does not use guarantee letters,” Herbosa said. “We only issue guarantee letters to private hospitals with which the DOH has a Memorandum of Agreement. Other than that, we do not use guarantee letters.”

Herbosa added that if a politician or any private individual issues a guarantee letter, that person—not the government—should be the one to pay the hospital bill.

The health secretary explained that the zero balance billing policy has been in full effect since July 2025, allowing patients admitted in basic or ward accommodation in DOH hospitals to receive services without paying out of pocket.

He assured the public that sufficient funding is available to sustain the program.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. signed the PhP6.793 trillion General Appropriations Act (GAA) for Fiscal Year 2026 on January 5, granting the DOH its largest budget allocation to date at PhP448 billion.

Herbosa further clarified that restrictions on political involvement in the distribution of financial assistance were enacted by lawmakers, not by the DOH.

Under the 2026 GAA, the distribution of cash and other forms of financial assistance must be carried out exclusively by authorized government personnel or accredited partner agencies. The law explicitly prohibits elective officials, candidates, politicians, political parties, and their representatives from influencing or participating in the actual distribution of assistance, except for officials with direct administrative authority over the implementing agency. | PND



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