

**AMPARO S. JACOBA, PETITIONER, VS. WORKMEN'S
COMPENSATION COMMISSION AND THE REPUBLIC OF THE
PHILIPPINES (BUREAU OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS) REPRESENTED BY THE
SOLICITOR GENERAL, RESPONDE...**

G.R. No. L-43665. July 30, 1979

Ponente: FERNANDEZ, J.

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FERNANDEZ, J.:

This is a petition for review of the order of the Workmen's Compensation Commission in RO9-WC Case No. 172-75 entitled "Amparo S. Jacoba, Claimant, versus, Republic of the Philippines (Bureau of Public Schools), Respondent" reducing the award for reimbursement of medical expenses from P1,999.66 to only P596.30.[1]

The petitioner is a public school teacher stationed at Siasi, Sulu. In the course of her employment, she contracted an illness allegedly caused by her work as teacher. By reason of her illness, petitioner was confined in the hospital during vacation time. Hence, there was no interruption in her actual teaching job during the regular school year. She was able to continue teaching.

According to the report of the Division Committee on Workmen's Compensation cases of the Bureau of Public Schools, Division of Sulu, dated February 20, 1975, the petitioner was afflicted with a work-connected illness.[2]

The petitioner filed a claim with the Regional Office No. 10 at Zamboanga City for reimbursement of medical expenses. After hearing, said unit rendered an award dated December 9, 1975 ordering the respondent, Bureau of Public Schools, to reimburse the petitioner the amount of P1,999.66.

The respondent appealed to the Workmen's Compensation Commission which reduced the award to P596.30.

The contention of the petitioner that the decision of the Hearing Unit of Regional Office No. 10 of Zamboanga City has become final, has no merit. The record shows that the respondent, Republic of the Philippines (Bureau of Public Schools), seasonably filed a motion for reconsideration. A copy of said motion for reconsideration was sent by registered mail on January 21, 1976 to the petitioner.

The Workmen's Compensation Commission reduced the award on the basis of the findings of the Chief of the Evaluation Commission of said Commission. There is no explanation, however, why the award was reduced. It is not disputed that the illness of the petitioner is compensable and she is entitled to the reimbursement of her medical expenses. Thus the Workmen's Compensation Commission said:

"We find no merit in respondent's contention because, in the instant case, the claimant was afflicted with a work-connected illness, per Report of the Division Committee on Workmen's Compensation cases of the Bureau of Public Schools, Division of Sulu, dated February 20, 1975, attached to the records, and that, by virtue of her illness, she was confined in the hospital, but only that it was during vacation time, as found by the hearing unit, hence, there was no interruption in her actual teaching job during the regular school year and she was able to continue teaching; thus the finding of the hearing unit which awarded her no disability benefit. But

the fact remains that she incurred medical expenses for her illness, which was medically evaluated as afore-stated. We see, therefore, no incompatibility to the unit's awarding her reimbursement of medical expenses for if such expenses are incurred that becomes a reimbursable amount under the law. The case of *Alatco vs. WCC, et. al.*, and other pertinent decisions of the Supreme Court give support to the stand of this Commission that reimbursement of medical expenses is allowable despite the fact that no disability compensation benefit is granted. x x x "[3]

There is a showing that the Hearing Unit of Regional Office No. 10 at Zamboanga City awarded the amount of P1,999.66 on the basis of the evaluation of Dr. Romulo P. Montecillo, the Compensation Rating Officer of the herein Unit. There is also a showing that the award was based on proper receipts presented by the petitioner.

The award of P1,999.66 appears to be reasonable.

WHEREFORE, the order of the Workmen's Compensation Commission dated March 3, 1976 sought to be reviewed is hereby set aside and the respondent, Republic of the Philippines (Bureau of Public Schools), is ordered to pay the petitioner the sum of One Thousand Nine Hundred Ninety-Nine Pesos and Sixty-Six Centavos (P1,999.66) as evaluated by the Rating Medical Officer of Regional Office No. 10 at Zamboanga City.

SO ORDERED.

Teehankee, (Chairman), Makasiar, Guerrero, De Castro, and Melencio-Herrera, JJ., concur.

[1] Annex "A", Rollo, pp. 6-7.

[2] *Ibid.*, Rollo, pp. 6-7

[3] Rollo, pp. 6-7.

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