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REPEAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 5, SERIES OF 2001 RE: GAMCA MEDICAL REFERRAL DECKING SYSTEM

DOH ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 167, S. 2004, August 30, 2004

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WHEREAS, the Executive Board of Health Ministers Council for Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States, i.e., Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, UAE, and Bahrain, decided to establish a centralized medical referral decking system to address the proliferation of fake medical certificates, existence of rebates that grossly affect the integrity of the medical testing done, and the need to protect their constituents from being infected by communicable diseases that may be carried by GCC-bound overseas Filipino workers (OFW). The "referral decking system" is said to have currently being practiced in six countries (excluding the Philippines) all over the world;

WHEREAS, The Gulf Cooperation Council Accredited Medical Clinics Association (GAMCA) was organized in compliance with a letter dated November 11, 1999 from the Executive Board of Health Ministers Council for GCC, urging the creation of a body which will maintain a central referral office for the medical examinations of Filipino applicants for employment in the GCC States;

WHEREAS, the Department of Health (DOH), taking into consideration the objective of the GAMCA referral decking system, precipitately issued Administrative Order No. 5, series of 2001, dated March 8, 2001;

WHEREAS, Administrative Order No. 106, series of 2002, dated April 26, 2002, was subsequently issued by the DOH suspending the implementation of the GAMCA referral decking system, pending receipt of communication of notices to concerned embassies;

WHEREAS, despite the issuance of A.O. No. 106, series of 2002, there are reports of the implementation of the GAMCA referral decking system for workers bound for Kuwait, Qatar, and Oman. It has been reported that GAMCA member clinics refuse to accept workers bound for these countries for their medical examinations unless they are referred by the GAMCA central office;

WHEREAS, His Excellency Mohammed Ameeh Wali, Ambassador, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, has expressed his country's concerns on the integrity of medical examinations, falsified documents vital to the processing of applications by OFWs;

WHEREAS, DOH issued Administrative Order No. 159, series of 2004, dated July 16, 2004, reiterating the continued suspension of the GAMCA referral decking system;

WHEREAS, after a series of dialogues with the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), concerned embassies and parties, A.O. No. 5, series of 2001, was re-examined and re-evaluated by the DOH, taking into consideration several concerns and issues raised by various parties affected by the said Order;

WHEREAS, after a meticulous and deliberate study, examination, and consultation about the GAMCA referral decking system, the DOH believes that its mandate is to protect and promote the health of the Filipino people by

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ensuring the rights to safe and quality health service and reliable medical examination results through the stricter regulation of medical clinics and other health facilities, which the referral decking system neither assures nor guarantees;

NOW, THEREFORE, for and in consideration of the foregoing, the DOH hereby withdraws, repeals and/or revokes Administrative Order No. 5, series of 2001, concerning the referral decking system. Hence, all other administrative issuances, bureau circulars, and memoranda related to A.O. No. 5, series of 2001, are hereby withdrawn, repealed and/ revoked accordingly.

This Order shall take effect upon publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Adopted: 30 Aug. 2004

(SGD.) MANUEL M. DAYRIT, M.D., M.Sc.
Secretary of Health

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