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**A Call for an Integrated Rehabilitation Program
Regarding the Philippines' "War on Drugs"**

**Position Statement by the Philippine Nurses Association of America (PNAA) on the
Role of Filipino-American Nurses**

On June 30, 2016, former Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte was inaugurated as the President of the Republic of the Philippines. During his campaign, as a highlight in his platform, he advocated for bold and drastic measures to solve the Philippines' rampant drug menace, criminality, and the culture of corruption as his main priorities upon taking oath of office. On assuming office, with reports and data available to him, President Duterte realized that the scope and magnitude of the drug menace, for decades ignored, tolerated or abetted in the past, called for a holistic and sustainable programs that will take a longer period of time than what was originally anticipated.

The "war on drugs" from July 1 to the present has resulted in considerable reported deaths linked to the "War on Drugs. The killings include both from legitimate police operations and vigilante-style and unexplained killings (including deaths under investigation). The killings have been a profound concern to many Filipinos and to other countries, with the perceived lack of accountability for human rights and the rule of law in the Philippines.

It has also been reported that the Philippines is showing initial success in eradicating the drug menace and in preventing the Philippines from becoming a Narco-state. President Duterte's war against illegal drug trade has reduced criminality by 50% nationwide, and with its limited resources the government has placed the drug addicts in rehabilitation centers. *(Source: Washington Post Letter to Editor, Rev. Arnedo S. Valera, Esquire, and Chairperson US Pinoys for Real Change in the Philippines (USPRCP) October 31, 2016.)*

The Philippine Nurses Association of America (PNAA) asserts that a successful rehabilitation program is an essential component of the War on Drugs. The right to treatment is a fundamental right, rehabilitation treatment is a health right – certainly, it falls under the scope and range of Human Rights.

The Philippine Nurses Association of America declares that we have a shared and cherished goal of helping drug users become productive members of society again. PNAA fully supports the Philippine government's rehabilitation of drug addicts, with special emphasis on education as integral to the success of the program.

Addiction is defined as a chronic, relapsing brain disease characterized by compulsive drug seeking and drug use, despite harmful consequences. It is considered a brain disease because drugs change the brain; they change its structure and how it works. These brain changes can be long lasting and can lead to many harmful, often self-destructive, behaviors.

(Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse, NIDA 2016. Media Guide- Retrieved November 14, 2016, from www.drugabuse.gov/publications/media-guide.) Such self-destructive behaviors, in the case of addiction to drugs, also lead to the destruction of the family, which spells danger and doom to any nation – the family being the basic unit of society. Strong, healthy families constitute a solid foundation, like a rock, assuring a nation's vibrant future.

PNAA agrees with the US Pinoys for Real Change in the Philippines (USPRCP) in its Statement of Support for the Philippines' Drug War that "the pervasive drug problem is a Global Scourge in Our Time, which should be urgently and fully addressed in accordance with justice and the rule of law, and involving the international community and the partnership of the public and the private sectors to insure workable, lasting solutions."

PNAA believes that the Philippine government is committed to upholding human rights and the law of the land in achieving an urgent and unprecedented national goal of winning the War on Drugs. The war against the illegal drug trade is a race against time, and against multiple enemies from without and within. PNAA supports the Philippines' profound commitment to halt its momentum into becoming a Narco-state, insuring prosperity for the country and its people, and saving its present and future generations.