

49th Malasakit Center opens in QC

SEN. Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go attended the launch of the country's 49th Malasakit Center at the Philippine Heart Center on Tuesday, November 5, the second time that a center was established in a specialty hospital after the first one was opened at the Lung Center of the Philippines in January.

Go, chairman of the Senate Health and Demography committee, said the Malasakit Center at the Philippine Heart Center in Quezon City would help poor patients in need of medical assistance from the government.

In an interview after the launching ceremony, Go said he filed a bill to institutionalize and set criteria for the establishment of Malasakit Centers to ensure that the centers are properly staffed and function properly.

The senator sponsored the committee report for the Malasakit Center Act of 2019, which has hurdled the interpellation period.

The Malasakit Center is a one-stop shop where patients only need to sign a single form to avail of government medical

assistance. Go clarified that the centers will serve as an office that hosts concerned government agencies that provide medical and financial assistance such as the Department of Health, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and the Philippine Health Insurance Corp.

Go explained that the medical and financial assistance provided in Malasakit Centers would come from the budget of concerned agencies with programs for poor and indigents patients.

Meanwhile, the senator again battled for the creation of the Department of Disaster Resilience.

"Isa ito sa aking na-file na priority bill, ang (this is one of my priority bills, the) Department of Disaster Resilience," he said.



ANOTHER ONE Sen. Christopher Lawrence 'Bong' Go (center) joins Quezon City Mayor Josefina Belmonte and Health Secretary Francisco Duque 3rd in launching the Malasakit Center at the Philippine Heart Center in Quezon City. PHOTO BY JOHN ORVEN VERDOTE

The senator filed in July Senate Bill 205, also known as the "Disaster Resilience Act of 2019," which seeks to establish "an

empowered, highly-specialized, and responsive Department of Disaster Resilience with clear unity of command."

The department aims to provide faster government response to natural disasters and calamities, such as typhoons and earth-

quakes, by putting together all related agencies under a single department.

JAVIER JOE ISMAEL