

AN ANALYSIS OF PRACTICES AND POLICIES OF ESTABLISHMENTS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DOLE HEALTH-RELATED DEPARTMENT ORDERS

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Abstract

The Occupational Safety and Health Standards, as amended (2016), requires all establishments to develop and implement in their respective workplaces occupational health programs that would ensure safety and health of their workers. Republic Act No. 11058 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations, Department Order No. 198-18, reiterated this requirement and imposed penalties to those establishments found violating the law. The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) also released health-related issuances to further prevent illicit drug use, and prevent and control the spread of TB and HIV and AIDS infections in the workplaces. However, data from government implementers point to some non-compliances in the private sector. Hence, this study aimed at determining whether the policies and programs developed by the establishments were consistent with the principles of the DOLE health-related department orders, and identifying the current practices done by companies in the implementation of these issuances.

Focus group discussions (FGD) were done in this study. A survey was also conducted to randomly selected private establishments in four regions from August 2019 to October 2019. Qualitative method was used in the analysis of the collected information from the FGD. Data gathered from the survey were encoded and analyzed using Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics including frequency distribution and percentages were measured.

Thirty-nine out of 384 companies agreed to participate in this study. Almost all of the respondents have written policies on the three health domains. However, there were respondents that did not fully implement the requirements stated in each of the health-related issuances, such as, conduct of various advocacy activities, establishment and capacitating of the company's Drug Assessment Teams, full adoption of DOTS strategy, work accommodation, monitoring of the affected workers, among others. Stakeholders pointed out that the lack of initiatives from the management in carrying out the policies and programs, giving more emphasis on the paper compliance, lack of monitoring and evaluation

mechanisms by the labor inspectorate, and lack of standardized orientation to the company decision-makers were the major challenges in the full implementation of the issuances.

This study found out that despite the availability of written policies on the DOLE health-related issuances, programs developed and implemented by the respondents were inconsistent with the principles of the issuances as shown by their current practices. Provisions of the existing DOs were considered adequate; however, inadequacy of mechanisms for review and monitoring of program implementation, standardized dissemination of DOLE health-related issuances, and capacity building of implementers were the main barriers seen leading to improper implementation of the policies. Hence, it is suggested that strict monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs be implemented at the enterprise level, more capability building activities for implementers, wider coverage of the DOLE-provided training on the issuances, and development of a mechanism strengthening the inspection system of DOLE.