

Department of Health (DOH) reiterated on Friday the policy that public officials and employees must not solicit or accept, directly or indirectly, any gift, gratuity, favor, entertainment, loan or anything of monetary value, from any person or business related to the tobacco industry in the course of their official duties.

The reminder was made by DOH Secretary Dr. Paulyn Jean B. Rosell-Ubial in observance of the 6th year anniversary of the joint undertaking between DOH and the Civil Service Commission on protecting the bureaucracy from tobacco industry interference.

Under the joint policy of DOH and CSC, public officials and employees shall interact with the tobacco industry only when strictly necessary, for effective regulation, supervision or control of the industry.

“The tobacco industry has no redeeming social value. Corporate social responsibility from an industry that is responsible for so much death and suffering is irresponsible,” the Health Secretary said.

In the said event also, held at CSC Office in Batasan Hills, Quezon City, Ubial also commended the Departments of Education, Labor and Employment, Foreign Affairs, Science and Technology, Commission on Higher Education, Career Executive Service Board, Bureau of Customs, Bureau of Internal Revenue, and local government units for excluding the industry responsible for tobacco-related diseases causing 10 Filipinos to die by the hour.

Meanwhile, Executive Director Anthonette Velasco of the Career Executive Service Board reiterated the guidelines requiring full disclosure of interactions with the tobacco industry by career executive service officers through notarized self-certification as an additional requirement for promotion in and appointment to career executive service rank.

Velasco said that “the disclosure of interaction shall not be a basis for outright disqualification of an applicant for CES eligibility, but the applicant will be subject to in-depth validation to further investigate circumstances related to the interaction.”

“Accepting money from tobacco industry is a form of corruption. The government should regulate the tobacco industry by taxing it. We cannot regulate this industry that is a vector of disease and death if we accept donations from it. These donations are a form of promotion. Promotion and advertisement of tobacco must be banned.” Ubial said.

Dr. Maricar Limpin of FCTC Alliance Philippines said that under the Duterte administration, she is looking forward that the end of tobacco advertisement, promotion and sponsorship, all done under the guise of corporate social responsibility will be ended.