Go launches 68th Malasakit Center

Sen. Christopher "Bong" Go yesterday visited East Avenue Medical Center in Quezon City to join the launch of the country's newest Malasakit Center – the 15th in Metro Manila, 33rd in Luzon and 68th in the country.

"Your Malasakit Center is now open. I repeat, the Malasakit Center is yours. It's for the Filipinos, it's your money that is just being returned to you," Go said in Filipino, addressing patients and personnel of the hospital.

The Malasakit Center inside the East Avenue Medical Center is a one-stop shop for patients to apply for medical and financial assistance from the four government agencies, namely the Department of Health, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and PhilHealth.

The senator explained to patients that the Malasakit Center aims to help them ease the burden to pay hospital bills up to the minimum cost or zero-balance, if possible.

Go said that before the Malasakit Center, patients or their representatives would need to spend more time, money and energy to ask for medical and financial assistance from concerned agencies through their different offices.

He also mentioned that through the Malasakit Center, senior citizens and persons with disabilities are also a priority and, since it was recently passed into law, the Malasakit Center will be established in all 73 DOH-run hospitals, giving more coverage and accessibility to poor and indigent Filipinos.

Local government unit-run hospitals may also establish Malasakit Centers provided that they comply with the standards stated in the implementing rules and regulations of the law.

In an interview, the senator told reporters that there is no politics involved in the Malasakit Center and that the only qualification to avail oneself of medical assistance is to be a Filipino.

Go also took the opportunity to meet some of the patients in the hospital. Aside from medical assistance, he also provided other forms of assistance to them.