

# Mrs. Aquino's Office to Pay Marcos Mother's Hospital Bills

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MANILA, Philippines (AP) — President Corazon Aquino's office has agreed to pay the medical bills of deposed President Ferdinand E. Marcos' 93-year-old mother, who has been hospitalized for more than eight years, the government said Sunday.

Josefa Edralin Marcos, a widow, remained at the Philippine Heart Center in suburban Manila when Marcos, his wife and three children and associates fled to Hawaii on Feb. 26 after a mainly peaceful military and popular revolt.

The Information Ministry said Mrs. Aquino's office agreed to pay the hospital bills "for humanitarian reasons" after a local newspaper columnist wrote that Marcos' mother did not have the money to do so.

The center director, Dr. Esperanza Cabral, said Marcos' mother is not suffering from any specific ailment.

"It's a case of general degeneration associated with old age," Ms. Cabral said in a telephone interview.

Ms. Cabral said Mrs. Marcos' bills for food and medicine reached \$57,333 by Sunday in the more than eight years she has been at the center.

Ms. Cabral says bills were issued and sometimes paid by the presidential palace, but she said Mrs. Marcos was never charged the regular room and board because she was the president's

mother. She did not elaborate.

Another hospital doctor, Roberto Yabut, said the center has been "a kind of second home" for Mrs. Marcos.

Asked if she is aware her son has left the country, Ms. Cabral said, "I think she has been told, but I don't know if it registered. . . . But that's only a conjecture because I really don't know."

Columnist Art Borjal of the newspaper Philippine Daily Inquirer wrote last week that Marcos' mother cannot sell the family's private Manila home, where she used to live, because the titles to the lot and house are not in her name.

"Since her son, Ferdinand, has his own financial problems in the U.S., (she) might have no one to turn to as she spends the remaining days of her life," Borjal wrote.

He was alluding to lawsuits filed by the Aquino government in U.S. courts in an effort to recover millions of dollars Marcos allegedly invested illegally in the United States.

Borjal suggested that "for the sake of Christian charity," the Aquino government use funds it froze in Marcos' Philippine accounts to pay his mother's hospital bills.