

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1366



Introduced by Representative Ferdinand L. Hernandez

AN ACT CREATING THE COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAM, INCREASING COMPENSATION AND OTHER BENEFITS FOR BARANGAY HEALTH WORKERS (BHWs), APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

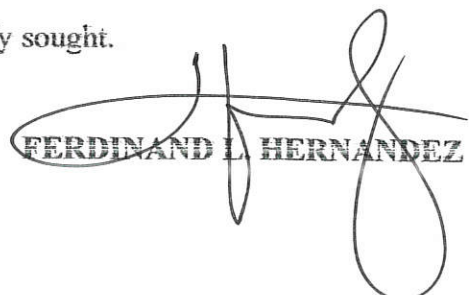
Under the Constitution, the State is mandated to adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development with the goal of making essential goods, health, and other social services available to all its citizens at an affordable cost.

Our Barangay Health Workers (BHWs) and Barangay Nutrition Scholars (BNS) play a critical role in the advancement of the country's health and human development agenda, as they provide front-line health services at the community level and act as health educators, community organizers, and primary care providers within their local villages. Due to the recognized lack of doctors and nurses in rural areas, BHWs are often called upon to provide a wide-array of information to constituents, administer first-aid and preventive care, as well as become emergency responders in times of calamity.

Given their importance, it is disappointing that barangays in far-flung rural areas have only one or two volunteer BHWs to meet the health needs of the barangay residents. This despite there being at least 219,433 active BHWs in the country spread out across 42,028 barangays. To worsen matters, these BHWs are only considered volunteers, and the law does not prescribe a fixed allowance for them nor do they enjoy security of tenure or retirement benefits.

This proposed bill seeks to prescribe a fixed monthly compensation and an Education and Training Program for BHWs to assist them in developing further their skills and in acquiring new knowledge. Through this bill, we will be able to develop deserving BHWs into skilled medical professionals and ensure a continuous supply of health workers to respond to the needs of their communities.

The immediate passage of this measure is earnestly sought.


FERDINAND L. HERNANDEZ

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Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

Section 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “Barangay Health Worker Act”.

Section 2. Declaration of Principles. – It is the policy of the State to adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall endeavor to make essential goods, health, and other social services available to all the people at affordable cost. In furtherance of this, the State shall endeavor to provide accessible and quality health services through barangay health workers as front-liners in community-based health interventions.

Section 3. Coverage. – The provisions of this Act shall be applicable to all barangay health workers under Republic Act No. 7883. For the purposes of this Act, the term barangay health worker shall refer to a person who has undergone a training program under any accredited government or non-government organization primarily to render health care services, pursuant to Republic Act No. 7883.

Section 4. Six-month Education and Training Program for Community-based Health Workers. – The Department of Health in coordination with the University of the Philippines, shall develop a competency-based education and training curriculum for all barangay health workers. The curriculum shall train community health workers as healthcare providers, community organizers, health service managers, trainers and educators, and researchers. It shall include basic orientation and training on health programs and institutionalized health service delivery system, primary healthcare, basic community organizing, local health research, social health insurance navigation, basic local resource generation and mobilization, training needs analysis, basic report writing and communication skills, and program planning and development. Courses on basic dental care, reproductive health, STI and HIV/AIDS prevention, nutrition, physical therapy, basic life support,

traditional and herbal medicine and reflexology shall also be offered. Such program shall be credited as units earned in higher education institutions with stepladder curricula that will entitle BBHWs to upgrade their skills and knowledge for community work or to pursue further training as midwives, pharmacists, nurses or doctors.

Section 5. Accreditation and Competency Assessment. – The Department of Health, in coordination with local governments and the Civil Service Commission, shall conduct a competency assessment test upon completion of the Education and Training Program, provided that this requirement shall be waived for those who have served as Barangay Health Workers for at least five (5) years. Only those who have passed the assessment test or have served as BHWs for at least five (5) years will be accredited. The Provincial Health Board, with the participation of TESDA, PhilHealth, and accredited training NGOs, is hereby mandated to carry out the accreditation of Barangay Health Workers.

Section 6. Program Cost and Cost Sharing for Local Government Units. – The basic Education and Training Program shall be offered free of charge. Local government Units shall adopt a cost-sharing financing scheme with the National Government through the DOH for the implementation of the basic course on Barangay Health Work depending on the income level of the concerned local government units.

Section 7. Compensation and Other Incentives. – All accredited Barangay Health Workers shall be entitled to a monthly basic pay of six thousand pesos (P6,000.00). They shall likewise be entitled to the incentives and benefits provided under the Magna Carta for Public Health Workers and shall be covered by all existing statutory benefits such as PAG-IBIG, GSIS and PhilHealth. In addition, they shall be given burial and disability assistance in case of death or if the BHW is afflicted by illness which results to disability, especially if such occurs in the duration of his service. A regular adjustment in monetary and other non-monetary incentives shall be made to help improve the living condition of Barangay Health Workers.

A BHW who has served for less than five (5) years upon the passage of this Act will be given a pro-rated amount based on years of service.

Section 8. Compensation based on PhilHealth Utilization. – PhilHealth is directed to develop a compensation package for accredited BHWs based on PhilHealth utilization for programs, including but not limited to, social health insurance navigation, maternal neonatal child health care and nutrition, primary care packages, rehabilitation, and recovery of senior citizens and Persons with Disability (PWD), provided that compensation received from PhilHealth will be over and above the monthly basic pay.

Section 9. Mandatory Continuing Community-based Health Education. – The DOH, in cooperation with TESDA, shall formulate a module for Mandatory Continuing Community-based Health Education (MCCHE). Each accredited BHW will be required to undergo an MCCHE at least every three (3) years of active service, or as warranted by the DOH.

Section 10. Implementing Agencies. – Within one (1) year from the effectivity of this Act, the TESDA and DOH, with the participation of various health union representatives

shall formulate, finalize and launch the BHW education training program, assessment, and national certification program. The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), DOH, LGUs and other appropriate government agencies, with the participation of various health union representatives shall provide the Implementing Rules and Regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act. The Implementing Rules and Regulations shall be published in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Section 11. Appropriation. – An initial allocation of Fifty Million pesos (P50,000,000.00) shall be included in the General Appropriations Act to support the policies and objectives under this Act. Congress shall provide subsequent appropriations in the annual budget of the Department of Health from sin tax revenues.

Section 12. Non-diminution of Benefits. – Nothing in this law shall be construed to eliminate or in any way diminish entitlements, or other benefits being provided to or enjoyed by BHWs under Republic Act No. 7883 or other laws and issuances, at the time of the promulgation of this Act.

Section 13. Separability Clause. – Should any provision of this Act be declared unconstitutional, the remaining parts not affected thereby shall remain valid and operational.

Section 14. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, orders, circulars, issuances, rules and regulations and parts thereof which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

Section 15. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in any newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,