

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 337

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Introduced by AKBAYAN Representative Tomasito S. Villarin

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article XIII, Section 11 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution lays down the national health policy in this wise: "The State shall 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 an affordable cost."

The country's Barangay Health Workers (BHWs) are a critical component of the community-based health system. They serve as the frontline provider of health services at the barangay level.

Apart from direct health services, they also act as health educators and community organizers. In most cases, they serve as first health responders in far flung villages where there are no medical practitioners to address illnesses of the residents. More importantly, they are also the first responders in times of calamities.

Statistics reveal that there are 219,433 active BHWs in the country's 42,028 barangays. Far-flung barangays have only one or two health volunteers. Being volunteers, they do not enjoy fixed allowances, security of tenure or retirement benefits.

This legislative proposal aims to prescribe fixed monthly compensation for BHWs. Furthermore, this bill seeks to introduce a Community Health Worker Education and Training Program that will provide capacity-building programs for BHWs.

By developing BHWs into skilled medical professionals and ensuring a continuous supply of grassroots public health workers supports the State's objective of responding to the growing health needs of local communities.

The immediate passage of this measure is earnestly sought.



TOMASITO S. VILLARIN

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

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

SECTION 1. TITLE. – This Act shall be known as the “Bibong BHW Act of 2016”.

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 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 the community health workers as healthcare provider, community organizer, health service manager, trainer and educator, and researcher. 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, traditional and herbal medicine and reflexology shall also be offered.

SECTION 6. 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 five (5) or more years. Only those who have passed the assessment test or have served as BHWs for five years or more 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 7. PROGRAM COST AND COST SHARING FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS. – The basic Education and Training Program shall be offered free of charge. Local governments 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 8. COMPENSATION AND OTHER INCENTIVES. – All accredited Barangay Health Workers shall be entitled to a monthly basic pay of six thousand pesos (PhP6,000.00). 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 less than five (5) years upon the passage of this Act will be given a pro-rated amount based on years of service. S/he will be given first priority in enlisting for the Education and Training Program.

SECTION 9. 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 neo-natal 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 10. MANDATORY CONTINUING COMMUNITY-BASED HEALTH EDUCATION. - The DOH, in cooperation with TESDA, will formulate a module for Mandatory Continuing Community-based Health Education (MCCHE). Each accredited BHW will be required undergo an MCCHE at least every three (3) years of active service, or as warranted by the DOH.

SECTION 11. 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 12. FUNDING SOURCE. - An initial allocation of Fifty Million Pesos (P50,000,000.00) shall be included in the General Appropriations 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 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 two (2) newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,