

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 6766



Introduced by **HON. ROZZANO RUFINO B. BIAZON**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In 2014, the Department of Health (DOH) estimated that the Philippines had only 3.5 physicians for every 10,000 people. Government physician to patient ratio, meanwhile, was at 3 to 100,000. The ideal ratio should be 1 to 1.5 physicians for every 1,000 population. The shortage is even more evident in rural areas where only one physician is available to serve 33,000 people. On the other hand, nurses and midwives (per 1,000 people) was reported at 0.24 in 2015 according to the World Bank.

These alarming ratios are the results, significantly, of migration to other countries in search of higher salaries and better opportunities. It could get worse if we do not provide our doctors, nurses, midwives as well as other health workers better working conditions and decent pay and benefits commensurate to their qualifications.

In the midst of the current global pandemic, health workers, including those working in government hospitals, research institutions and local government units, are at the frontline of the COVID-19 outbreak response. They are exposed to hazards that put them at risk of infection. These perils include pathogen exposure, long working hours, psychological distress, fatigue, occupational burn-out, stigma, physical and psychological violence.

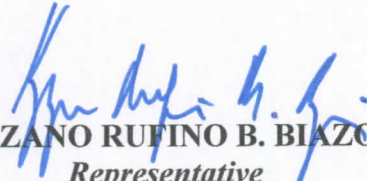
There are endless stories about these government health workers having to endure physical and mental exhaustion. There is the torment of difficult triage decisions. The pain of losing patients and colleagues.

As of April 22, 2020, the DOH reported that more than 1,000 health workers in the country were positive for the coronavirus disease, most of whom are physicians.

This proposed measure aims to address the government's crisis in health workforce by upgrading their minimum salary grade levels by two (2) salary grade levels. It seeks to discourage the country's medical professionals from leaving the country. It seeks to make their salaries more competitive. The bill also provides them a much-deserved additional benefit and incentive. But most important, this proposed measure is a gesture of recognition of their unselfish sacrifices and efforts in times of public health crises such as the COVID-19 outbreak.

The proposed increase in the basic salaries of the government health workers is a leap from the pitiable and insulting present entry level salaries. However, it is not really the increase in the amount of salary that matters. It is the acknowledgement of their important roles in our public health system as our everyday heroes, and presently, our brave frontliners in the fight against a global pandemic.

For the foregoing reasons, the immediate consideration and passage of this bill is earnestly urged.


ROZZANO RUFINO B. BIAZON
Representative
Lone District, Muntinlupa City

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AN ACT
UPGRADING THE MINIMUM SALARY GRADE OF HEALTH
WORKERS IN GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS, RESEARCH
INSTITUTIONS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the ‘*Government Doctors and Other Health Workers Salary Upgrading Act of 2020*’.

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State shall promote and protect the right to health of the people by providing each individual unimpaired access to affordable, quality and effective health services. Towards this end, the State shall ensure adequate remuneration and incentives for health workers in government hospitals, research institutions and local government units to attract them to remain in public service and to recognize their sacrifices as frontliners in the delivery of essential health services to the people particularly in times of public health crises.

SECTION 3. *Upgrading of Salary Grade Level.* – The present minimum salary grade level of the following health workers in government hospitals, research institutions and local government units shall be upgraded by two (2) salary grade levels:

- a. Physicians, except those occupying positions with Salary Grade 30;
- b. Hospital Administrators;
- c. Nursing Professionals which includes nurses and midwives;
- d. Pharmacists;
- e. Nutritionists and Dieticians;

- f. Medical Technologists which includes Acupressure Technicians, Medical Laboratory Technicians, Medical Technologists and Radiologic technologists; and
- g. Occupational, Physical, Respiratory and Speech therapists:

Provided, That government doctors occupying positions with Salary Grade 30 shall receive a Specialist's Allowance the amount of which shall be determined by the Secretary of Health. The Specialist's Allowance shall be in such amount which, when added to the basic salary of said physician, shall not result to a salary equivalent to the next salary grade level.

SECTION 4. *Annual Loyalty Service Pay.* – In recognition of their sacrifices and services, health workers in government hospitals and research institutions, in addition to incentives and benefits already granted them under existing laws, shall be entitled to an *Annual Loyalty Service Pay* equivalent to fifty percent (50%) of the prevailing basic monthly salary to government physicians who have rendered at least three (3) years of government service, which shall take effect immediately upon effectivity of this Act.

SECTION 5. *Appropriations.* – Such initial amount as may be necessary to carry out the objectives of this Act shall be sourced from the savings of the Executive Branch of the government. Thereafter, subsequent funds needed shall be included in the General Appropriations Act for the year following the effectivity of this Act.

SECTION 6. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the validity of the remaining provisions hereof shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 7. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, executive orders and rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with any provision of this Act are hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SECTION 8. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days from its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.