

Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

**EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

**HOUSE BILL NO. 6949**



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INTRODUCED BY **HONORABLE ALAN 1 B. ECLEO**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Health is a fundamental right of every Filipino. As provided for in Section 15 of Article 2 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, "The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them". Pursuant to health being an established fundamental right, this bill seeks to convert the Basilisa Mother and Child Specialty Hospital located in the Municipality of Basilisa, Province of Dinagat Islands from a Level 1 health facility into a Level 2 health facility with hundred (100) bed capacity, and rename it to Ruben E. Ecleo Sr. General Hospital, to be under the full administrative and technical supervision of the Department of Health (DoH).

This will be the first health facility in the Province of Dinagat Islands capable of handling patients needing intensive care and immediate surgical care with the increased capacity to take in patients all over the province. As all other health facilities in the island is on a mere infirmary level status, the presence of specialist care such as an Adult Intensive Care Unit, Pediatric Intensive Care Unit and a High-risk Pregnancy Unit with a surgically-capable team to handle trauma cases and cesarean section will greatly improve the health outcomes and survivability of patients coming from the province.

Currently, all trauma, obstetric emergencies and critically ill patients are transported by sea to Caraga Regional Hospital in mainland Surigao City in the neighboring Province of Surigao del Norte. Meanwhile, critically ill patients needing specialized surgery are sent to Southern Philippines Medical Center in Davao City. Sea travel from the island province of Dinagat to Surigao del Norte ranges from 1.5 hours to 4 hours depending as to the port of departure from the island, while travel by land from Surigao City to Davao City can take up to 8 hours. Factoring in transporting patients by land from the Municipalities to the District Hospitals, then to the nearest port, travel time alone proves to be one of the weakest links in the chain of survival of these patients.

Service delayed is service denied. This delay is a factor in an increasing mortality rate in the province. There are times when patient transport proves very difficult, especially during bad weather conditions when sea travels are more often than not cancelled. Moreover, transporting patients during these times would mean danger to the lives of the patients and health personnel accompanying them. Since sea transport is not available 24 hours, the burden of having the patients transported after service hours is put on the patient's families, as they need to secure a sea craft willing to travel during the wee hours of the night. This is all on top of the high amount of out of pocket expenses the families need to pay for chartered trips to Surigao City.

The Coronavirus pandemic has all the more highlighted the vulnerability of the province and its capability in responding to health emergencies, as border controls such as the "lockdowns" were put in place. Consequently, patients needing advanced care cannot be easily transported to Surigao City as the receiving province is also controlling movement in and out of the City. Moreover, the accompanying health personnel including the boat men would also need to undergo a mandatory 14-day quarantine in a designated quarantine facility upon return to the island, thus hampering their livelihood and comfort while further complicating the facilitation of one patient transfer. This puts a strain on the Island's limited human healthcare resources.

With this Level II Health Facility in place, the province will be more self-reliant in handling advanced and difficult health emergencies, providing a pool of health specialists and experts within its borders that will help save lives in difficult times. The presence of these specialists will also increase the level of care in the whole province through subsequent staff training to uphold standards of practice per specialty. The more highly trained personnel are available in the island, the more it will propagate a more competent health workforce within the province. This gatekeeping mechanism will also aid in the decongestion of the Caraga Regional Hospital in Surigao City from patients being referred from Dinagat Islands.

The establishment of this Health Facility will increase the survival rate of people living in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas as it will make medical services accessible, available and affordable for the people of Dinagat Islands.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



**ALAN B. ECLEO**

*Representative, Lone District of Dinagat Islands*



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**AN ACT CONVERTING THE BASILISA MOTHER AND CHILD SPECIALTY HOSPITAL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BASILISA IN THE LONE LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF DINAGAT ISLANDS INTO A LEVEL II HOSPITAL, WHICH SHALL BE KNOWN AS THE "RUBEN E. ECLEO, SR. GENERAL HOSPITAL," UNDER THE FULL ADMINISTRATIVE AND TECHNICAL SUPERVISION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, 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 "Ruben E. Ecleo Sr. General Hospital Act".

**Section 2. Declaration of Policy.** It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.

**Section 3.** The Basilisa Mother and Child Specialty Hospital in the Municipality of Basilisa, Province of Dinagat Islands, is hereby converted to a Level II Hospital to be known as the Ruben E. Ecleo, Sr. General Hospital.

**Section 4.** The Ruben E. Ecleo, Sr. General Hospital shall have the capabilities of a Level II Hospital, increasing its bed capacity to one hundred (100) beds, and shall be under the direct administrative and technical supervision of the Department of Health (DOH).

**Section 5.** The existing services and facilities and other services of the hospital are hereby upgraded to conform with the bed capacity increase as provided for in Section 4 hereof. The existing medical personnel shall also be correspondingly increased. The DOH, in coordination with the DBM and the CSC, shall determine the additional plantilla positions to be created and filled.

**Section 6. Government Contributions.** The sum of Four Hundred Fifty-Six Million Seven Hundred Fifty-Five Thousand and Seven Hundred Pesos (Php 456,755,700.00) is hereby authorized to be appropriated, out of any funds in the National Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the conversion, operation and maintenance of the said hospital for the fiscal year of the enactment of this Act. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for its operation and maintenance shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

**Section 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** Within six (6) months following the effectivity of this act, the Secretary of the Department of Health shall promulgate the rules and regulations as may be necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

**Section 8. Separability Clause.** Should any part or provision of this Act be held unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

**Section 9. Repealing Clause.** Any other law, issuance or part thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

**Section 10. Effectivity.** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.