

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 6955



Introduced by Representative **JANETTE LORETO-GARIN, MD, MBA-H**

**AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE PROTECTION AND ADVANCING THE
WELFARE OF MEDICAL FRONTLINERS IN THE PHILIPPINES,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Truth be told, the emergence of COVID-19 is the largest global health crisis recorded in our recent history. In this war that our country has waged against the novel coronavirus, our medical frontliners are putting their lives on the line. They have to respond and save lives, notwithstanding the fact that this enemy is invisible, which makes the task harder more than now than ever.

Our medical frontliners are facing an enormous and unprecedented workload in this COVID-19 pandemic. They are under protected and overworked. Despite this situation, they are moving forward to halt the spread of this virus.

Like our soldiers, our medical frontliners are vulnerable to mental and emotional stress. The possibility of having their immediate family members contract COVID-19 will always be there. But the call of duty is greater. And they choose to heed to that call.

As an act of solidarity and support to our present heroes, it is necessary to advance their welfare by instituting a policy that will safeguard them and their families. They deserve the highest form of protection that the government can provide for them.

Now, more than ever, it is the most opportune time to reciprocate the sacrifices that the medical frontliners have given to curb the transmission of the disease.

In view thereof, the immediate passage of this measure is earnestly sought.


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SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Frontline Health Workers Welfare Act of 2020*”.

Sec. 2. *Declaration of the Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to uphold the welfare of front line health workers and assume the responsibility for the protection, respect, and improvement of the sector by instituting measures towards competent and relevant practice for the health and safety of the public, just and human condition of work, and promotion of professional growth. Thus, the State recognizes frontline health workers as prime movers of national development.

Sec. 3. *Coverage.* – The provisions and benefits provided for in this Act shall be given to public and private frontline health workers. For the purpose of this Act, front line health workers shall mean all persons who are engaged in health, and health-related work in health facilities, regardless of employment status, whether salaried, contracted, or volunteers. This shall include all persons employed in all hospitals, sanatoria, health infirmaries, health centers, rural health units, barangay health stations, clinics, duly-registered nursing homes, and other health-related establishments.

Sec. 4. *Additional Benefits for Frontline Health Workers.* – The following incentives and benefits shall be provided to medical frontliners:

- a. In times of a pandemic or a public health emergency, front line health workers shall be entitled to a one-time allowance of Five Thousand Pesos (Php 5,000.00) at the start of the pandemic or public health emergency;
- b. Free mandatory Continuing Medical Education (CME) program, equivalent to two (2) Continuing Professional Development (CPD) units, for frontline health workers to enhance and upgrade the

- competencies and qualifications of frontline health workers in times of a pandemic or a public health emergency;
- c. Free annual influenza and pneumococcal vaccination and other vaccines for health workers; and,
 - d. Free annual influenza vaccination for the qualified dependents of health workers.

Provided, that upon the availability of new vaccines and breakthrough drugs, priority access shall be given to the frontline health workers and their immediate family.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) is hereby tasked to ensure the effective delivery of appropriate responsive social welfare mechanisms for our frontline health workers, one that is adaptive to the prevailing pandemic context to carry out the purposes of this Act.

Sec. 5. *Mental Health of Frontline Health Workers.* - Every frontline health worker shall be entitled to a yearly mental health leave of five (5) days with pay. *Provided*, that responsive mental health services shall be developed and integrated as part of the medical health benefits of the front line health workers. *Provided further*, That mental health therapy, consultations, and medications shall be available to all frontline health workers until three (3) years after their end of service.

The standards of mental health services shall be determined by the Department of Health (DOH) in consultation with stakeholders based on the most current mental health practices.

Sec. 6. *Appropriations.* - The amount necessary to carry out the provisions regarding vaccines and breakthrough drugs shall be sourced from the Department of Health while the provision on allowances shall be sourced from the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the succeeding GAA under the emergency fund.

Sec. 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DOH and DSWD, in coordination with other concerned government agencies and interest groups, shall formulate and adopt amendments to the existing rules and regulations of this Act.

Sec. 8. *Repealing Clause.* - All law, executive orders, rules, and regulations or any part thereof inconsistent herewith are deemed repealed or modified accordingly.

Sec. 9. *Separability Clause.* - If any part or provision of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional and invalid, such declaration shall not invalidate other parts thereof, which shall remain in full force and effect.

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

Approved,