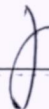


SENATE

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S. B. No. 165

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INTRODUCED BY SENATOR RISA HONTIVEROS

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

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 endeavour to make essential goods, health and other social services available to all the people at an affordable cost."

Barangay Health Workers (BHWs) play a critical part of this health and human development agenda, providing front-line health services at the community level and acting as health educators, community organizers and primary care providers within their local villages. Given the dearth of doctors and nurses in rural areas, BHWs are often the first line of defense against illnesses, the information source for maternal and neonatal care as well as family planning, and also the first responders during periods of calamity.

According to latest available data, there are 219,433 active BHWs in the country spread out across 42,028 barangays. While some barangays have a sufficient number of BHWs, the barangays in far-flung rural areas have only one or two volunteers – toiling every day to provide for the health needs of the barangay residents. Yet, these BHWs are considered only volunteers, and the law does not prescribe a fixed allowance for them. Nor do they enjoy security of tenure or retirement benefits.

This Act seeks to correct that not only by prescribing a fixed monthly compensation for BHWs, but also by introducing a Community Health Worker Education and Training Program that will provide training and development programs for BHWs to develop their skills and acquire knowledge. The aim of this Act is two-fold: to hone and develop deserving BHWs into skilled medical professionals, and second, to ensure a continuous supply of grassroots public health workers to respond to the health needs of their communities.

The immediate passage of this measure is earnestly sought.


RISA HONTIVEROS
Senator

SENATE

19 JUL -2 AM 55

S. B. No. 165

RECEIVED BY

[Signature]

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR ANA THERESIA "RISA" HONTIVEROS BARAQUEL

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 2019".

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

1 unconstitutional, the remaining parts not affected thereby shall remain valid and
2 operational.

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4 **Section 14. *Repealing Clause.*** - All laws, decrees, orders, circulars, issuances, rules
5 and regulations and parts thereof which are inconsistent with this act are hereby
6 repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

7
8 **Section 15. *Effectivity.*** - This act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
9 publication in the Official Gazette or in any two (2) newspaper of general circulation in
10 the Philippines.

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14 ***Approved,***