

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7856



Introduced by: Hon. Angelina "Helen" D.L. Tan, M.D.

**AN ACT
ESTABLISHING AT LEAST ONE (1) MEDICAL SCHOOL IN EVERY REGION OF THE
COUNTRY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article II, Section 15 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that, "The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them. Likewise, Article XIII, Section 11 states that 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 affordable cost." Article XII, Section 12, on the other hand, provides that "The State shall establish and maintain an effective food and drug regulatory system and undertake appropriate health manpower development and research, responsive to the country's health needs and problems."

Pursuant to the aforesaid provisions of the Constitution, this bill seeks to make quality and world-class medical education accessible to all Filipinos through the establishment of medical schools in every administrative region of the country.

The bill is in support of ensuring the "formulation and implementation of a National Health Human Resource Master Plan that will provide policies and strategies for the appropriate generation, recruitment, retraining, regulation, retention and reassessment of health workforce based on population health needs" as provided under Section 23 of Republic Act No. 11223, otherwise known as the "Universal Health Care Act".

The Philippine Star in its editorial reports that "Several years after some 100 private hospitals across the archipelago were forced to close shop for lack of health professionals particularly physicians, the country continues to suffer from a shortage of doctors (19 July 2013).

This is the sad situation of most hospitals especially in rural areas in Visayas and Mindanao, which has become even more alarming inasmuch as prestigious medical institutions find it difficult to attract fresh graduates to fill up slots for doctors. The government has acknowledged the reality that, indeed, the country is facing an alarming shortage of medical doctors along with other medical professionals. Medical studies in the country are also too costly that it has become beyond the reach of Filipino families even those belonging to the higher middle-income class.

The establishment of a medical school in all seventeen (17) regions of the country is envisioned to meet the target number of doctors that the country badly needs, especially during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic and to bolster the implementation of UHC for all Filipinos. Moreover, the bill serves as a complementary policy to strengthen the existing and future medical scholarship program of the government that seeks to create a steadily expanding pool of medical doctors in order to enable the government to deliver timely, adequate, competent and affordable medical and health care services to the people, especially the poor.

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

ANGELINA "HELEN" D.L. TAN, M.D.
4th District, Quezon

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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 “Paaralang Medikal sa Bawat Rehiyon ng Bansa Act”.

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared to be the policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people through the formulation and implementation of policies and strategies for the appropriate generation, training, and education of health workforce to meet the health needs of the population and to ensure that the shortage of medical practitioners in the country is properly addressed.

Towards this end, the State shall guarantee the provision of world-class, quality and accessible medical training and education to all Filipinos by establishing medical schools throughout the administrative regions of the country.

SEC. 3. Purposes and Objectives. - The main purposes and objectives of this Act are to:

(a) Ensure the establishment of quality and accessible medical schools in every region of the country that do not have existing state universities and colleges (SUCs) offering a degree in medical education;

(b) Provide a simplified and rationalized guidelines of granting authority to offer a doctor of medicine program; and

(c) Make an inventory of existing medical schools and Department of Health (DOH)-operated hospitals in the country.

SEC. 4. Establishment of At least One (1) Medical School in Every Region. – Within three (3) years after the effectivity of this Act, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), in coordination with the DOH, shall facilitate the establishment of at least one (1) medical school in every region of the country where there is no existing state colleges and universities (SUCs) offering a degree in medicine.

SEC. 5. Identification of SUCs and DOH-operated hospitals. - The CHED, in coordination with the DOH, shall identify the SUCs and the DOH-operated hospitals that shall be mandated to work together in the establishment of medical schools in their respective administrative regions.

SEC. 6. Streamlining of Requirements for the Application for Authority to Offer a Doctor of Medicine Program. – To expedite the establishment of medical schools, particularly in priority regions of the country, the CHED shall streamline the requirements for the application for authority to offer Doctor of Medicine Program. The CHED and DOH shall issue the appropriate guidelines within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act to facilitate the partnership between SUCs and DOH-operated hospitals with the view of increasing the number of medical schools throughout the country with one (1) region having at least one (1) state-operated medical school.

SEC. 7. Implementation. – The CHED is hereby mandated to be the lead agency in the implementation of this Act. It is also mandated to formulate a guideline of requirements and to structure a timetable to ensure the implementation of this Act, in consultation with the DOH.

SEC. 8. *Tax Exemption.* – All medical schools that shall be established under this Act shall be exempt from payment of all taxes, fees, assessments and other charges of the Government, its branches and subdivisions.

It shall likewise be exempt from the payment of customs duties, taxes and tariffs on the importation of equipment, books, supplies, instruments, materials and goods, including donations. *Provided, That* these are of international standards and are not available from local manufacturers; *Provided, further, That* the importation shall only be in such numbers as may be required by the medical schools.

SEC. 9. *Tax Deduction or Exemption of Donations and Contributions.* – All legacies, gifts and donations for the benefit of the medical schools that shall be established under this Act, or for its support and maintenance, or for aid to any of its students shall be tax-exempt and shall be an allowable deduction from the gross-income of the donors.

SEC. 10. *Funding.* – As lead agency to carry out the provisions of this Act, the CHED shall be allocated a budget of Five billion pesos (Php5,000,000,000.00) revolving fund starting from the effectivity of this Act.

The DOH is authorized to charge against its current appropriations such amounts as may be necessary for the implementation of this Act. Subsequent funding requirements shall be incorporated in the annual budget proposals of the respective agencies through the General Appropriations Act. Additional funds and possible fund sources as may be necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be identified and provided for by the Department of Budget and Management.

SEC. 11. *Annual Report.* – The CHED, through its Chairperson, shall submit to the Office of the President, the Senate and the House of Representatives, within the first quarter of the succeeding year, an annual report relating to the progress of the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 12. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Chairperson of the CHED, in consultation with the DOH and key stakeholders, shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act within ninety (90) days after approval of this Act.

SEC. 13. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, and rules and regulations, or parts thereof, inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 14. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act shall be held unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 15. *Effectivity Clause.* – *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,