

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
FIRST REGULAR SESSION)



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Introduced by Representative Rufus B. Rodriguez

2728

House Bill No. _____

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to create a hospital dedicated to overseas Filipino workers and their dependents.

Section 3, Article XIII of the 1987 Philippine Constitution states that the State shall afford full protection to labor, local and overseas, organized and unorganized, and promote full employment and equality of employment opportunities for all. Pursuant to this, Republic Act No. 8042 otherwise known as the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 was enacted to implement this State policy.

Due to differing culture, working conditions and upper-hand nature of overseas employers characterizing overseas employment, overseas Filipino workers often find themselves vulnerable to abuse, discrimination and exploitation. Some of them come home with poor health conditions that need immediate attention. Based on statistics, about 42% of all repatriated OFWs returned to the Philippines needing medical attention or hospital confinement for various physical or mental illnesses sustained abroad.

This bill seeks to address the health needs of overseas Filipino workers by creating a hospital that exclusively caters to them. This proposed measure also aims to complement the present package of health services provided by OWWA so as to include supplementary provisions for preventive, promotive, diagnostic and rehabilitative programs so that a comprehensive/total health care for OFWs and their dependents can be had.

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


RUFUS B. RODRIGUEZ

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
FIRST REGULAR SESSION)

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Introduced by Representative Rufus B. Rodriguez

House Bill No. 2728

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS HOSPITAL AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) Hospital Act or OFW Hospital Act”.

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of the Filipino people and to instill health consciousness among them. The State shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development. Further, the State shall protect the interest and promote the well-being of overseas Filipino workers (OFW) as recognition of their importance and contribution to economic development and nation building.

SEC. 3. *Establishment of the OFW Hospital.* – There shall be established a hospital with at least tertiary level of care to be known as OFW Hospital, hereinafter referred to as the Hospital. The Hospital shall be developed consistent with the health care needs of the OFW and their dependents. The Hospital shall be under the full administrative and technical supervision of the Department of Health (DOH).

SEC. 4. *Objectives.* – To ensure the availability, accessibility and affordability of quality health care, the Hospital shall have the following main objectives:

(a) Provide comprehensive and total health care services to all migrant workers including Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) contributors, whether active or non-active, and their legal dependents;

(b) Conduct medical examinations to ensure the physical and mental capability of would-be overseas contract workers duly covered by an approved job order;

(c) Serve as primary referral hospital for repatriated OFW needing medical assistance and support;

(d) Set up systems that will effectively monitor condition of patients and to generate relevant health information and data for policy formulation; and

(e) Participate in the health care provider networks and arrangements relative to the implementation of Republic Act No. 11223, or the “Universal Health Care Act”.

SEC. 5. *Medical Assistance.* – The Secretary of Labor and Employment (DOLE), as Chairperson of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) Board, shall ensure that existing health benefits and medical assistance programs are strengthened to include, among others, subsidies on hospitalization and medical procedures for OFW and qualified dependents.

SEC. 6. *Joint Executive Oversight Committee.* – There is hereby created a Joint Executive Oversight Committee on OFW Hospital to review and recommend hospital development plans and ensure implementation of this Act.

The Committee shall be co-chaired by the Secretary of Health and the Secretary of Labor and Employment. It shall be composed of seven (7) members including the co-chairs. The members shall be appointed by the Secretary of Health upon consultation with the Secretary of Labor and Employment.

SEC. 7. *Tax Exemption.* – All grants, bequests, endowments, donations and contributions made to the OFW Hospital to be used actually, directly and exclusively by the OFW Hospital shall be exempt from donor's tax and the same shall be considered as allowable deduction from the gross income of the donor, in accordance with the provisions of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended.

The importation of equipment, machinery and spare parts which are used solely and exclusively for the operation of the OFW Hospital and are not available locally shall be exempt from value-added tax and customs duty.

SEC. 8. *Appropriations.* – The Secretary of Health shall include in the Department's program the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act. The OWWA shall also include in their benefits and medical assistance programs for OFW the line item budget necessary to improve the access of OFW and dependents to health care services.

SEC. 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days from the approval of this Act, the DOH, in coordination with DOLE, OWWA, Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) and other stakeholders, shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 10. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other provisions hereof.

SEC. 11. *Repealing Clause.* – All other laws, decrees, executive orders, and rules and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 12. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,