

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)



23 JUL 12 AIO :56

SENATE
S. No. 2297

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Christopher Lawrence "Bong" T. Go

AN ACT
ENHANCING THE MEDICAL ACCESS OF OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS AND
THEIR FAMILIES, INSTITUTIONALIZING FOR THE PURPOSE THE OVERSEAS
FILIPINO WORKERS (OFW) HOSPITAL, APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) are hailed as "modern-day heroes" not only for their remittances that contribute to the country's Gross Domestic Product, but also for their sacrifice of having to leave their families behind just to uplift the quality of lives of their loved ones. Some find their fortune abroad, while some experiences are harsher than others.

As the number of Overseas Filipino Workers continue to grow, numerous problems and challenges confront OFWs and their families. To recognize the significant contribution of overseas Filipinos to the country and to further enhance reintegration efforts of the government for OFWs, former President Rodrigo Duterte issued Executive Order No. 154 in 2021 establishing the OFW Hospital in Pampanga. The hospital is envisioned to provide comprehensive and total health care services to all OFWs and their dependents.

In order to harmonize policies and functions of different agencies, and ensure sufficient funding for the hospital, this proposed measure institutionalizes the OFW

Hospital under the administrative supervision of the Department of Migrant Workers. In coordination with the DOH, the OFW Hospital will provide 24/7 telehealth services to migrant workers and their families. This service can be extended at the Philippine foreign post to assist in the medical assessment and management of distressed OFWs while awaiting repatriation. This bill will also strengthen health surveillance through the provision of a post-employment or post-arrival medical examination for OFWs.

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



SENATOR CHRISTOPHER LAWRENCE "BONG" T. GO

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S. No. 2297

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AN ACT
ENHANCING THE MEDICAL ACCESS OF OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES, ESTABLISHING FOR THE PURPOSE THE OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS (OFW) HOSPITAL, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

1 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "OFW Hospital Act."
2

3 SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is the policy of the State to protect and promote
4 the right to health of the Filipino people and to instill health consciousness among
5 them. The State shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health
6 development. Further, the State shall protect the interest and promote the wellbeing
7 of overseas Filipino workers in recognition of their importance and contribution to
8 economic development and nation building.
9

10 SEC. 3. *Establishment of the OFW Hospital.* - There shall be an Overseas Filipino
11 Workers (OFW) Hospital located in the City of San Fernando, Pampanga. The OFW
12 Hospital shall primarily cater to and be developed consistent with the medical needs
13 of overseas Filipino workers and their dependents: Provided, That nothing herein shall
14 prevent the OFW Hospital from accommodating patients other than overseas Filipino
15 workers and their dependents.

16 For purposes of this Act, dependents shall refer to any of the following: (1) the

1 legal spouse entitled by law to receive support from the overseas Filipino worker; (2)
2 the legitimate, legitimated, legally adopted, or illegitimate child who is unmarried, not
3 gainfully employed, and has not reached twenty-one (21) years of age, or if over
4 twenty-one (21) years of age, is congenitally incapacitated or while still a minor has
5 been permanently incapacitated and incapable of self-support, physically or mentally;
6 or (3) the parents who are receiving regular support from the overseas Filipino worker.

7
8 *SEC. 4. Management of the OFW Hospital.* - The OFW Hospital shall be under the
9 administrative supervision of the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW): Provided,
10 That in the performance of its mandate as herein provided, the DMW shall closely
11 coordinate and consult with the Department of Health (DOH). The Hospital Chief of
12 the OFW Hospital, in consultation with the DOH, shall prepare a development plan to
13 reflect the objectives of the OFW Hospital.

14
15 *SEC. 5. Organizational Structure and Staffing Pattern of the OFW Hospital.* - The
16 OFW Hospital shall be headed by a Medical Center Chief who is a licensed physician
17 and with experience in hospital administration and management for at least five (5)
18 years. The Medical Center Chief shall be appointed by the Secretary of Migrant
19 Workers upon the recommendation of the Secretary of Health.

20
21 The DMW, in coordination with the DOH and Department of Budget and
22 Management (DBM), shall determine the organizational structure, staffing pattern,
23 and list of plantilla positions of the OFW Hospital as it may deem necessary for the
24 effective performance of the OFW Hospital, in accordance with civil service rules and
25 regulations.

26
27 *SEC. 6. Powers and Functions.* - To ensure the availability, accessibility, and
28 affordability of quality health care, the OFW Hospital shall have the following duties
29 and functions:

30 (a) Provide comprehensive and total health care services to all OFWs and their
31 dependents;

32 (b) Conduct pre-employment medical examinations for prospective OFWs duly

1 covered by an approved job order;

2 (c) Serve as a referral facility for repatriated OFWs needing medical assistance and
3 support while ensuring its participation in the provincial and inter-regional
4 healthcare provider networks to allow for a seamless and coordinated referral
5 system for the medical repatriation program in accordance with Republic Act
6 No. 11223, otherwise known as the Universal Health Care Act;

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

9 (e) Promote, encourage, engage in and publish scientific research on the
10 prevention, care and treatment of occupational diseases common to OFWs,
11 including the underwriting of researches on biological, demographic, social,
12 economic, physiological aspects of occupational disorders of OFWs;

13 (f) Develop and encourage public interest in, as well as the dissemination and
14 exchange of information on the prevention, treatment and control of diseases
15 common to OFWs, and OFW occupational health and physical fitness, especially
16 the promotion of health and rehabilitation, and other related fields;

17 (g) In coordination with the DOH, encourage and undertake the training of
18 physicians, nurses, medical technicians, health officers and social workers on
19 the practical and scientific conduct and implementation of OFW occupational
20 health services;

21 (h) In coordination with the DOH, provide 24/7 telehealth services to migrant
22 workers and their families. The service may be extended at the Philippine
23 foreign post or the Philippine Overseas Labor Office to assist in the medical
24 assessment and management of distressed OFWs while awaiting repatriation;

25 (i) In coordination with the DOH, strengthen health surveillance through the
26 provision of a post-employment or post-arrival medical examination for OFWs;
27 and

28 (j) Assist and support universities, research institutions and other hospitals or
29 medical facilities in their studies on health-related concerns of OFWs.

30
31 **SEC. 7. *Establishment of OFW Wards.*** – The DOH shall establish OFW centers or
32 wards in DOH-retained hospitals to complement the OFW Hospital. The level of OFW

1 services and corresponding facilities in OFW centers or wards and their respective
2 health human resource requirements shall be determined by the DOH, in coordination
3 with stakeholders: Provided, That the standards to be adopted thereon shall be
4 consistent with the Philippine Health Facility Development Plan.

5
6 SEC. 8. *Medical Assistance.* - The Secretary of the DMW shall ensure that existing
7 health benefits and medical assistance programs are strengthened to include subsidies
8 on hospitalization and medical procedures for OFWs and qualified dependents:
9 Provided, That nothing in this Act shall be construed to diminish or reduce the existing
10 benefits of OFWs and their dependents provided under Republic Act No. 11223,
11 otherwise known as the ""Universal Health Care Act.""

12
13 SEC. 9. *Referral System.* - The DMW shall establish a referral system with the OFW
14 Hospital and OFW Care Centers to ensure proper delivery of services to qualified
15 overseas Filipino workers and their dependents.

16
17 SEC. 10. *Appropriations.* - The Secretary of the Department of Migrant Workers
18 shall include in the Department's program the budgeted needed for the effective
19 operation of the OFW Hospital, the funding of which shall be included in the annual
20 General Appropriations Act.

21
22 SEC. 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within sixty (60) days from the
23 approval of this Act, the DMW, in coordination with the DOH, OWWA, and other
24 stakeholders, shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) to carry
25 out the provisions of this Act.

26
27 SEC. 12. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is held invalid or
28 unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other
29 provisions hereof.

30
31 SEC. 13. *Repealing Clause.* - All other laws, decrees, executive orders, and rules
32 and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby

1 repealed or modified accordingly.

2

3 SEC. 14. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication
4 in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,