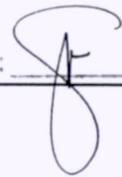


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC )  
OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
First Regular Session )



'19 AUG 20 P 4 :08

SENATE  
S.B. NO. 949

RECEIVED BY: 

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Introduced by Senator Maria Lourdes Nancy S. Binay

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**AN ACT**  
**STRENGTHENING THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM IN CULTURAL AND**  
**INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES BY INSTITUTIONALIZING THE TRAINING**  
**AND EMPLOYMENT OF TRIBAL HEALTH WORKERS AND FOR OTHER**  
**PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Philippine Constitution, Article II, Sections 15 and 22, provides:

“Section 15. The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.”

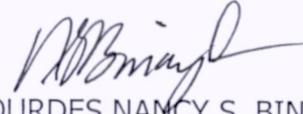
“Section 22. The State recognizes and promotes the rights of indigenous cultural communities within the framework of national unity and development.”

Our indigenous cultural communities (ICCs) lack of access to basic services especially healthcare is still a continuing problem. This is mostly due to the fact that ICCs are settled in far-flung areas which make it difficult for them to avail of the benefits of modern medicine and healthcare and sequentially makes them susceptible to serious health problems and complications.

This proposal seeks to establish and institutionalize the training of tribal health workers. Their designation is intended to help complement the existing efforts of barangay health workers and the DOH in providing primary healthcare in their

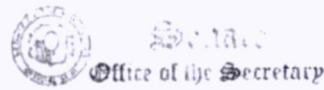
respective communities in order to prevent health problems and pursue effective community-based health services.

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



MARIA LOURDES NANCY S. BINAY  
Senator

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

1 Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Tribal Health  
2 Workers Act of 2017.”

3

4 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The Philippine Constitution of 1987  
5 provides that the State shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to  
6 health development which shall endeavor to make essential goods, health and  
7 other social services available to all the people at affordable cost. It is also the  
8 policy of the State to provide cheap and affordable quality medicine and medical  
9 services to citizens in far-flung areas and indigenous communities.

10

11 Sec. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act, the following words and  
12 phrases shall be defined as:

13

14

15

16

(a) “Barangay Health Worker” refers to a person who has  
undergone health care training programs in any accredited  
government or non-government organization and who  
voluntarily renders primary health care services in the

1 community after having been accredited to function as such  
2 by the local health board in accordance with the guidelines  
3 promulgated by the Department of Health (DOH), as  
4 defined in Republic Act No. 7883;

5 (b) "Tribal Health Worker" refers to members of ICC who have  
6 undergone health care training by either government or  
7 non-government organizations and renders voluntary health  
8 care in the tribal community;

9  
10 Sec. 4. . *Tribal Health Workers* – all tribal communities which are located  
11 about ten kilometers (10km) from the barangay center are qualified to have  
12 tribal health workers (THW). The number of families in a community will  
13 determine the number of THW in that community – One (1) tribal health worker  
14 for every thirty (30) families.

15  
16 Sec. 5. *Selection and Training of Tribal Health Workers* – The tribal Chief  
17 shall appoint, in accordance with the traditions of the tribe, the tribal health  
18 worker and submit his name to the local health board who in turn shall register  
19 the appointed tribal health worker. The local health board will furnish a copy of  
20 the list of tribal health workers to the DOH which shall maintain a national list of  
21 tribal health workers.

22  
23 Sec. 6. *Responsibilities of tribal health workers* – The THW is responsible  
24 for providing primary health care to members of the tribes. He is also responsible  
25 for assisting, if needed, sick person/s to the nearest clinic or hospital.

26  
27 Since primary health care may use herbal medicines that are traditional to  
28 the tribe, the THW is mandated to establish an herbal garden in the community.  
29 The barangay LGU, the municipal LGU and the CENRO of the DENR are hereby  
30 required to provide assistance to the THW in establishing such herbal garden.

1            *Sec. 7. Benefits of Tribal Health Workers* – Similar to the Barangay Health  
2 Workers who are provided with a number of benefits under RA 7883, the THW  
3 are granted the following incentives and benefits:

4            (a) Free health care insurance and hospitalization – the THW  
5 shall be provided with free PhilHealth Insurance. In  
6 addition, the THW shall be entitled to free hospitalization in  
7 case of work-related sickness or injury. The Department of  
8 Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) shall provide the  
9 insurance and bear the expenses of the hospitalization of  
10 the THW. The DSWD shall work closely with the local health  
11 boards in granting these benefits to the THW, particularly in  
12 identifying those who are entitled to such;

13           (b) Educational benefits – the THW is entitled to free tuition in  
14 public high schools and universities. Should the THW not be  
15 able to avail of this incentive, he is allowed to transfer this  
16 benefit to any one of his/her legitimate children. This  
17 benefit can only be availed by active THWs;

18           (c) Continuing training – the DOH shall be responsible for  
19 providing the continuing training for the THW on new and  
20 emerging primary health care management as well as new  
21 and emerging herbal medicines;

22           (d) Free legal services – the Public Attorneys' Office shall  
23 provide free legal advice to THW if there are occasions that  
24 the latter needs one; provided, however, that the occasion  
25 arises from or in connection with the exercise of his duties  
26 and responsibilities as THW.

27  
28           *Sec. 8. Rules and Regulations of this Act* – the DOH, DSWD, DILG and  
29 DENR shall be responsible for the formulation of the Implementing Rules and

1 Regulations (IRR) of this Act which shall be formulated within one hundred  
2 eighty (180) days upon its approval.

3

4       Sec. 9. *Separability Clause* – If any provisions of this Act is declared  
5 invalid, the remainder, or any provisions of this Act is not affected thereby shall  
6 remain in force and in effect.

7

8       Sec. 10. *Repealing Clause* – All laws, executive orders, proclamations, and  
9 other presidential issuances which are inconsistent with this Act shall be deemed,  
10 amended or modified accordingly.

11

12       Sec. 11. *Effectivity Clause*. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days  
13 after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of  
14 general circulation.

Approved,