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Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Thirteen Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1862

Introduced by Honorable Jose Carlos V. Lacson

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to provide for the upgrading of the rates of compensation of doctors, nurses and other health workers in the government service.

Health is a vital component of a nation's development. In recognition thereof, the Constitution provides that the State shall protect and promote the right to health of people and instill health consciousness among them.

Our doctors and nurses, as well as the other public health workers, play an indispensable role in the realization of the above-stated policy. Health workers deal with life and death situation which requires heightened mental awareness and physical stamina. They exercise a high level of independent judgments and decisions in their approach to patient care. They are the frontliners in the delivery of health care. They are constantly at high risk of being exposed to hazards of being contaminated with the diseases of the patients they are attending to. Most of the time, the nature of their work requires them to be on call anytime of the day and work beyond their official time. It is therefore, but fitting that people performing health services should be given incentives.

The great responsibilities of government doctors, nurses and other health workers should be given due consideration in the compensation scheme of the government. Presently, they are not justifiably compensated. As a result, many of our trained nurses are forced to look for jobs abroad. Thousands of our nurses are leaving the country annually just to work in other countries, such as the U. S. A., Europe and other Asian countries like Japan. Worse, some of our physicians are taking up the nursing course just to land a job with better pay in

other countries. This is their recourse to improve their standard of living and give their families comfortable lives.

Quite alarming is an article published in the San Francisco Chronicle dated November 5, 2003 which states that: "Manila – Brain drain has long been a problem for 3rd World Nations but the Philippines is increasingly witnessing a TREND that carries alarming implications for the future. Medical doctors training as nurses so they can leave the country for the MONEY." Further, in the study conducted by The National Institute of Health Policy and Development thru its Director Marilyn E. Lorenzo, it has been found that "the strongest factor behind the doctors transformation into nurses is simply the chance for a better quality of life" and that "if we don't stem this massive migration of doctors . . . . . the whole health system could collapse."

This bill aims to increase the compensation of health workers in the government service to be more competitive with other profession, and thereby minimize the problem of brain drain in our country.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is highly recommended.

JOSE CARLOS V. LACSON

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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HOUSE BILL NO. 1862

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE STANDARDIZATION OF THE RATES OF COMPENSATION OF THE DOCTORS, NURSES AND OTHER HEALTH WORKERS IN THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

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

SECTION 1. *Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "Public Health Workers Compensation Structure of 2004."

SEC. 2. *Statement of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to establish a highly motivated salary structure for public health workers to prevent the imminent and inevitable collapse of the Health System in our country. To achieve this objective, the government shall promote and maintain high morale among public health workers by upgrading and standardizing their rates of compensation commensurate to the sacrifices and hazards associated with their position and functions.

SEC. 3. *Coverage.* – All doctors, nurses and health workers in the government service shall be covered by this Act.

SEC. 4. *Pay rate.* – The basic pay of health workers with salary grade 22 and below shall be upgraded from their current salary grade to two grades higher.

SEC. 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Department of Health, in coordination with the Department of Budget and Management, shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 6. *Funding.* – The funding sources for the amounts necessary to implement this Act shall be as follows:

a) For workers in national government, the amount shall be charged against the savings of their respective offices under the current General Appropriations Act. Thereafter, such amounts as are needed shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act;

b) For workers in the Local Government Units, the amount shall be charged against their respective local funds. Local government units which do not have adequate or sufficient funds shall only partially implement the upgraded rates: *Provided,* That any partial implementation shall be uniform and proportionate for health workers positions in each local government unit concerned.

SEC. 7. *Repealing Clause*. – All laws, decrees, executive orders and other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 8. *Effectivity*. – This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,