

Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City

**THIRTEENTH CONGRESS**  
FIRST REGULAR SESSION

**HOUSE BILL NO. 2299**

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*Introduced by Honorable* **ALFREDO D. MARAÑON III**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

The Philippine Medical Association (PMA) in a published manifesto in Manila Bulletin on September 25, 1996 opposed SB 1471, HB 2324, 7418 and 7469 filed during the 10<sup>th</sup> Congress that sought to promote, advocate and integrate traditional and alternative health care into the national health care delivery system. These bills had a common Declaration Policy “to improve the quality and delivery health care services through the development of Philippine traditional and alternative medicine (health care) and its integration into the national health care delivery system.” A substitute bill was subsequently enacted into Law and is now Republic Act. No. 8423.

The PMA firmly believes that scientific medicine has no equal in health care delivery. If we sincerely want to develop the medicinal potentials of our “7000 species of medicinal plants” we should go for it with well organized and adequately funded scientific investigations.

Therefore, the PMA proposes the creation of National Health Research Institutes to provide the key to unlock the active compounds from indigenous and non-indigenous sources and other health potentials obtainable in our country.

Filipinos are very scientifically literate people. Given the proper motivation, facilities and adequate resources we can do it. The passage of this act is urgently requested.

  
**ALFREDO D. MARAÑON III**

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**AN ACT**  
**CREATING NATIONAL HEALTH RESEARCH INSTITUTES,**  
**APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

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

**SECTION 1. Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “National Health Research Institutes Act of 2004.”

**SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – It is hereby declared the policy of State to improve the quality of health care to Filipino people by the creation of National Health Research Institutes (NHRI) that will harness the health potentials of indigenous products and materials, practices and other sources through basic and clinical biomedical research.

**SEC. 3. Definition of Terms.** –

- a) Traditional Medicine – as system of healing practices transmitted by word of mouth and/or example without written instruction.
- b) Alternative Medicine – other modalities of healing practices, not necessarily practised for centuries or handed down from one generation to another and without sound scientific basis and distinctly separate from biomedicine.
- c) Biomedicine – a system of health care using methods of diagnosis and treatment based on anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, pathology and on biomedical research.
- d) Herbal Medicine – medicinal products not necessarily produced by pharmaceutically good manufacturing practice, using parts of plants and/or combinations thereof either in the crude state or as plant preparations.

**SEC. 4. The Objectives of this Act are:**

- a) To expand the frontiers of knowledge by investing wisely on biomedical research that will lead to better health for all.
- b) To encourage research and development on indigenous health care systems.
- c) To promote research and development of drugs from indigenous and non-indigenous sources.
- d) To encourage basic and clinical research on diseases peculiar to our country and ecology.
- e) To develop health scientists for basic and clinical research.
- f) To create and fund intramural and extramural research programs for health.
- g) To receive grants, donations, contributions to develop its intramural and extramural research programs.
- h) To develop database for all diseases found in the country through epidemiologic surveys, analyses and recording.
- i) To build a research hospital and laboratory complex for its intramural programs.
- j) To establish and maintain in a national library of medicine.
- k) To formulate policies to implement and strengthen the role of the NHRI in the national health care system.

**SEC. 5. *Organization.*** – There is hereby established by this Act, The National Health Research Institutes which shall be under the Office of the President of the Philippines as a separate and independent body, managed and directed by highly competent administrators and first-rate biomedical scientists for effective and productive implementation of the objectives.

The NHRI shall foster and maintain research partnerships with universities, academic health centers, hospitals and independent research institutions in the country and abroad where research programs, product development activities, training of research investigators and communication of biomedical information are widely available.

- a. The NHRI shall be governed by a Board of Trustees composed of scientifically oriented persons from the following disciplines listed alphabetically:

- |                     |                                           |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| a.a biochemistry    | a.g nutrition                             |
| a.b botany          | a.h pharmacy                              |
| a.c dental medicine | a.i alternative health care practitioners |
| a.d epidemiology    | a.j physics                               |
| a.e medicine        | a.k veterinary medicine                   |
| a.f mental health   |                                           |

These members shall preferably have Doctorate in Philosophy PhD or its equivalent and recommend by peer review of professional bodies. They shall elect a Chair, a Vice-Chair and Secretary Treasurer from among themselves.

- b. The Board shall meet once a month or as often as exigencies of the service demand to develop and approve intramural and extramural research programs.
- c. Approval of research projects shall be by peer review. A panel of scientific experts, primarily from outside biomedical sciences initially evaluates the scientific merit of the application. Then, a national advisory council or board composed of eminent scientists as well a public members who are interested in health issues biomedical sciences determines the project's overall merit and priority in advancing the research agenda of the NHRI
- d. The Intramural Research Programs are central to the NHRI scientific activities. High caliber scientists are the key to NHRI Intramural research Program. They shall collaborate with one another regardless of institute affiliation or scientific discipline and have the intellectual freedom to pursue their research leads in NHRI's research hospital and laboratories. These explorations range from basic biology to clinical studies on diagnosis and treatment of diseases.
- e. The Extramural Research Programs involve grants and contracts supporting research and training of scientists in biomedical sciences. Final decisions about funding extramural research are made at the NHRI headquarters. The research process begin with an idea that an individual scientist describes in a written application for a research grant. Each research grant application undergo the same peer review evaluation as that of Intramural Research Program by a panel of scientific experts.

**SEC. 6. *Functions of the NHRI.*** – The National Health Research Institutes shall have the following functions:

- a) To formulate, evaluate and support intramural and extramural research programs.
- b) To conduct studies and research in the development of drugs from indigenous and non-indigenous sources.
- c) To formulate and execute programs for the study and research in traditional and alternative health care practices.
- d) To survey and identify areas of the country endemic to certain diseases.
- e) To receive grants, subsidies, donations, contributions from corporations, trusts, foundations, associations and persons, whether domiciled here and in other countries.

- f) To establish research facilities for its Intramural Research Programs.
- g) To establish appropriate organization and management system to carry out effectively the objectives of this Act.

**SEC. 7. *Director General and Deputy Director General.***- The NHRI shall have a Director General and Deputy Director General who shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines from among the best minds in administration and management in the country. They shall supervise and direct the management, operation and administration of the NHRI and such other duties delegated by the Board of Trustees to execute contracts, acquire and dispose assets and deliver documents on behalf of the NHRI.

**SEC. 8. *Appropriations.*** – The amount necessary to implement the provisions of this Act shall be included in the General Appropriation Act for the year following its enactment and it is hereby created as the NHRI Development Fund which shall be used for the research program of the NHRI in the amount of One Billion Pesos (P1 Billion) annually for the first 5 years and Five Hundred Million Pesos annually thereafter.

**SEC. 9. *Implementing Rules.*** – The Board of Trustees shall promulgate the rules that will implement this Act, within ninety days from organization.

**SEC. 10. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws and proclamations inconsistent or contrary to the provisions of this Act are hereby amended, modified or repealed, provided that Republic Act 8503 shall continue to be operative for the University of the Philippines System.

**SEC. 11. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect upon publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.