

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

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS
FIRST REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE BILL NO. 3316



Introduced by **Honorable RODOLFO T. ALBANO**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Section 12, Article XIII (Social Justice and Human Rights) of the Constitution provides as follows:

Sec. 12 The State shall establish and maintain an effective food and drug regulatory system and undertake appropriate health manpower development and research, responsive to the country's health needs and problems. (Underscoring supplied)

The country currently faces a looming crisis in health services due to the unabated migration of health and medical professionals lured by higher salaries, better working conditions and more opportunities for professional growth in foreign countries. The Philippines now holds the dubious distinction of being the top exporter of nurses. Doctors are also leaving the country in droves. Of late many doctors have even opted to go back to school to become certified nurses just to get out of the country to work elsewhere.

Reports are rife that hospitals in rural areas in Visayas and Mindanao face imminent closure because of the lack of doctors and nurses. Even prestigious medical institutions find it difficult to attract fresh graduates to fill up slots for doctors. The government has acknowledged the reality that, indeed, the country is facing an alarming shortage of medical doctors and other medical professionals.

Since medical doctors constitute the core of a country's public health service system, the shortage of doctors severely prejudices the capacity of government to deliver timely, adequate, competent and affordable medical and health care services to our people, especially the poor who direly need such services but can hardly afford them, and whose only access to such services is through the public health service system.

Thus, there is an urgent need to create a steadily expanding pool of medical doctors to strengthen the core of the public health service system through a program that can enable more qualified and public-service oriented young people to pursue medical education and effectively facilitate their integration into the public health service system in such manner that would ensure the harnessing of their talents within an optimum period of time for the benefit of our country and people.

This bill seeks to address that need by establishing a Philippine Medical Scholarship and Service Program.

The program shall provide scholarships in the field of medicine to deserving and qualified young people. The University of the Philippines, through its College of Medicine, shall serve as the principal medical educational institution within which grantees or scholars of the program shall pursue their medical training and studies.

The government shall pay all the necessary expenses such as tuition, matriculation and all other school fees, prescribed textbooks and other educational supplies and equipments, board and lodging expenses, clothing and uniform allowances, traveling expenses and other related miscellaneous living allowances.

Upon passing the medical board examination, the scholar shall spend his/her post-graduate internship in a public health institution to commence his /her integration into the public health service system and shall accordingly be given the appropriate rank and salary. Such integration into the public service system shall be mandatory for a period equivalent to at least three (3) years for each year of scholarship benefits received. The program shall be administered by a Board empowered to formulate and implement policies, rules and regulations, and all such other activities for the effective pursuit of the goals of the program.

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


RODOLFO T. ALBANO III

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AN ACT

**ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE MEDICAL SCHOLARSHIP AND SERVICE PROGRAM AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

Section 1. **Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the "*Philippine Medical Scholarship and Service Act*".

Sec. 2. **Declaration of Policy.** – It is the policy of the State to undertake health manpower development responsive to the country's health service needs. Towards this end, the State shall provide scholarship grants to deserving and qualified individuals to pursue education and training in the field of medicine, and shall formulate and implement such policies and programs to integrate these individuals, upon qualifying as doctors of medicine, into the public health care system.

Sec. 3. **Medical Scholarship** – There shall be an annual selection, through appropriate examinations and screening processes, from among qualified graduating students of appropriate courses in colleges and universities nationwide, those who shall be granted scholarships in medicine to be known as "*medical scholars*", which scholarships shall cover expenses, such as, among others, tuition, matriculation and other school fees; prescribed textbooks, supplies and equipment; board and lodging expenses; clothing and uniform allowances; traveling expenses and other related miscellaneous living allowances, Provided, that at least five (5) candidates per region, or when practicable, one (1) candidate from every province and city shall be chosen to participate in the annual selection, and Provided further, that at least fifty (50) candidates shall be selected as "medical scholars" annually.

Sec. 4. **Qualifications of Candidates.** – Candidates for medical scholarship grants shall possess the following minimum qualifications:

1 Sec. 6. – **Medical Service Program.** – The medical scholar shall, pursuant to the agreement
2 provided in Section 5 (d) hereof, render services and be integrated into the public health service
3 system as medical doctor, with the appropriate rank and salary upon his/her passing of the medical
4 board examination; Provided, that such service and integration in the public health service system
5 shall be mandatory for a period equivalent to at least three (3) years per year of scholarship
6 availment and within which period , the medical scholar is granted every opportunity to be promoted
7 and to advance in the service; and Provided, further that he/she shall undertake post graduate
8 internship in a public health or medical institution and such internship shall be part of the mandatory
9 service and integration into the public health service system.

10 Sec. 7. **Medical Scholarship and Service Board (MSSB).** – There is hereby created a
11 Medical Scholarship and Service Board (MSSB) which shall administer the Philippine Medical
12 Scholarship and Service Program (PMSSP) and shall be empowered to formulate, consolidate,
13 integrate, systematize and implement all policies, rules and regulations and programs related thereto
14 and intended to enhance the effectiveness thereof.

15 The MSSB shall be composed of the Chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education, the
16 Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Health, the Secretary of Budget and Management, the
17 President of the University of the Philippines System, the Dean of the College of medicine of the
18 University of the Philippines and the Chairpersons of the Committees on Health and Higher Education
19 of the House of Representatives and the Senate. The members of the MSSB shall be entitled to
20 reasonable amounts of per diems and transportation allowances.

21 The Chairman of the Commission on Higher Education shall be the Chairman of the Board.

22 Sec. 8. **Functions of the Board.** – The MSSB shall have the following functions:

- 23 a. Determine, formulate and promulgate the appropriate policies, measures, rules and
24 regulations necessary to implement, maintain, and enhance the effectiveness of the PMSSP;
- 25 b. Establish cooperative and coordinative linkages with other educational and related
26 institutions in the public and private sectors to ensure the effective implementation of the PMSSP;
- 27 c. Prescribe such tests, standards and/ or criteria for the selection of medical scholars;
28 and the relevant and appropriate terms and conditions governing scholarship availments and
29 integration of qualified medical scholars into the public health service system;
- 30 d. Determine the various expenses to be covered by the scholarship, and approve the
31 timely payment thereof to medical scholars from such sums appropriated by law and such other
32 funds available for the purpose;

- a. Must belong to the top twenty five per centum (25%) of their respective graduating classes and completing undergraduate courses identified by the Board as a prerequisite course to the pursuit of studies in the field of medicine;
- b. Family and or personal incomes are not sufficient to finance their education in the field of medicine;
- c. Must be in good health and of good moral character; and
- d. Must be not more than twenty-five (25) years of age and a natural born citizen of the Philippines.

Sec. 5. **General Conditions of the Scholarship Grant.** – A medical scholar shall receive and continue to enjoy the benefits of the scholarship until he/she completes his/her course, subject to the following conditions:

- a. He/she shall pass the entrance/ admission examinations and related requirements of the College of Medicine of the University of the Philippines;
- b. He/she shall enrol in the University of the Philippines College of Medicine and carry the full load of subjects prescribed per semester by the said medical school, and shall, under no circumstance, drop a course which will result in under-loading; and
- c. He/she shall be allowed, for valid reasons preventing his/her enrolment, to defer availment of the scholarship and/or to file a leave of absence for a period equivalent to and/or not exceeding one schoolyear.
- d. He/she shall, prior to the grant of medical scholarship, sign an agreement stating the terms and conditions of the scholarship on a form prescribed by the Medical Scholarship and Service Board (MSSB);
- e. He/she shall repay the full amount of scholarship funds and benefits received and spent for his/her benefit and the scholarship shall be terminated in the event the grantee accepts another scholarship from other government or private agencies or entities; and
- f. He/she shall also repay the full amount of scholarship funds and benefits received and spent for his/her benefit in case of failure to complete the medical course without valid cause, *Provided that, if such failure is due to academic failings, physical and mental disabilities and incapacities, and such other reasonable causes, and he/she pursues and completes another course to qualify him/her as a medical practitioner, he/she may choose, instead of repayment of scholarship benefits, to render services and be integrated into the public health service system for a period equivalent to four(4) years of service for every year of scholarship availment.*

- 1 e. Approve the staffing pattern and salary and/or compensation of officers and personnel
2 of the Secretariat;
- 3 f. Conduct regular meetings at least twice a month, or upon the call of the Chairman of
4 the Board; and
- 5 g. Perform such other duties and functions as hereinafter be assigned to it by the
6 President of the Philippines.

7 Sec. 9. **Secretariat.** – There shall be a Secretariat to provide administrative and technical
8 assistance to the MSSB in the implementation of the PMSSP. It shall be headed by an Executive
9 Director , and its staff shall be recruited preferably from qualified professionals from the academe and
10 the medical profession.

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12 Sec. 10. **Appropriation.** – The sum of One Hundred Million (P100,000,000.00) Pesos is
13 hereby authorized to be appropriated to constitute the initial PMSSP Fund. Thereafter, such
14 additional sums as may be necessary shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

15 Sec. 11. **Donations, Grants, etc.** – The Council may accept donations, legacies, grants and
16 other contributions to form part of the Medical Scholarship Fund: Provided, That such donations,
17 legacies, grants and contributions shall be exempt from taxation and shall be allowable deductions for
18 income tax purposes. Proceeds from at least two (2) draws of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes per
19 year shall also be allocated to finance the PMMSP.

20 Sec. 12. **Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – The Chairman of the Commission on
21 Higher Education in coordination with the Secretary of Education, the President of the University of
22 the Philippines System and the Chairpersons of the Committees on Health and Education of the House
23 of Representatives and the Senate shall issue such rules and regulations as may be necessary for the
24 effective implementation of this Act within sixty (60) days from the effectivity thereof.

25 Sec. 13. **Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in at
26 least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

27 **Approved**