

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5562



Introduced by Hon. Tomas M. Dumpit

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This Bill seeks to separate the Veterans Memorial Medical Center (VMMC) from the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO) and be elevated into a Bureau under the Department of National Defense.

The VMMC was established primarily to provide patient care to our World War II veterans and their dependents, AFP retirees became recipient/beneficiaries of this mission with the enactment and facilities amounted to \$9.5 million when the exchange rate was P2.00 to \$1.00. The hospital was a gift from the American people to the Filipino soldiers who fought side by side with them during the World War II.

The Medical Center has a bed capacity of 1,000 and is presently operating with 766 beds. It attends to all types of veterans: World War II veteran, Spanish-American veteran, PEFTOK or Korean veteran, Hukbalahap, and lately, the AFP retired soldiers covered by Republic Act No. 6948 to include their dependents.

As agreed upon by the United States of America and the Republic of the Philippines, the supervision of the VMMC shall be done by the Secretary of National Defense. Prior to the reorganization in 1972, the Center was a bureau in the then Ministry of National Defense in level with the PVAO.

Because of the primary objectives in the establishment of the Center which is hospitalization of veterans and their dependents, the VMMC was integrated to the PVAO, reducing its status from a bureau to an agency level, as contained in Letter of Instruction No. 19. The reorganization of the Ministry of National Defense, though the main functions and objectives of this hospital is entirely different from PVAO.

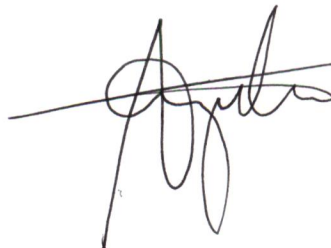
There is an urgent need to elevate the VMMC to a bureau level to attain its four-fold mission and objectives more effectively and efficiently to wit:

- (1) Patient care – to provide the best possible medical care and treatment to eligible veterans and their dependents. This is the foremost function of VMMC. Primarily, the VMMC caters only to veterans and their dependents. Eventually, because of developments, this hospital became open to the citizenry of the Philippines and nearby community on a case to case basis;
- (2) Medical education and training – to provide an integrated, comprehensive and progressive educational training program in the medical and allied fields not only among its staff and personnel but also to fellow, residents, interns and undergraduate students;
- (3) Research – to develop the research capabilities and potentials of the medical center by initiating, encouraging and promoting basis and clinical research activities;
- (4) Civic action programs – the VMMC is actively involved in civic and outreach program in selected depressed areas, the Philippine Board of Mercy and the civic action program of the national government. This hospital was able to send medical and paramedical personnel in time of calamities to areas directly affected.

The VMMC, particularly the heads of departments and chiefs of services and division experience demoralization in the implementation of some welfare benefits like the representation and transportation allowance (RATA). Likewise, due to the salary standardization, all department heads, heads of services and divisions as well as 80% of the rank and file positions were downgraded because of the present structures. The grades allocated to positions were very low compared to the accountabilities and responsibilities involved. It does not satisfy the principle of "equal work for equal pay."

Section 21 of LOI No. 19 maintains that the integration of the VMMC to PVAO will not change or alter the functional and structural integrity of the hospital. However, the reverse is true. It should be realized that the organization structure affects the behavior and morale of the people in the organization. The upgrading of salary grades for most of the rank and file will alleviate the economic and financial difficulties of the employees are presently experiencing. This can only be a possibility if the VMMC is elevated to a Bureau level.

Since there is a position of undersecretary for Veterans Affairs in the Department of National Defense, there is an appropriate need to elevate the VMMC to a bureau level. Hence, approval of this Bill is earnestly requested.

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AN ACT
SEPARATING THE VETERANS MEMORIAL MEDICAL CENTER FROM THE
PHILIPPINE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE, AND ELEVATING IT INTO A
BUREAU UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE, AMENDING
FOR PURPOSE LETTER OF INSTRUCTION NUMBER NINETEEN

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

SECTION 1. The Veterans Memorial Medical Center (VMMC) shall be
elevated into a separate Bureau, under the supervision of the Department of
National Defense.

SEC. 2. The Secretary of National Defense and the Undersecretary for
Veteran Affairs shall formulate the necessary rules and regulations that shall
govern the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 3. Letter of Instruction No. 19 is hereby repealed.

SEC. 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.