

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 1474

Introduced by Representatives
DIOSDADO MACAPAGAL ARROYO and GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A SPECIAL HOSPITAL FOR OVERSEAS FILIPINO
WORKERS (OFWS) AND THEIR DEPENDENTS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Filipino OFWs are very much in demand abroad as they are committed and hardworking with an incomparable work ethic unmatched in the world. Considered as our new breed of Filipino heroes, they choose to leave the country to seek greener pastures to be able to provide for their families despite the many risks involved in working in a foreign country.

The Constitution, under Section 3, Article XII, expressly states that the State shall accord full protection to labor, local and overseas, organized and unorganized, and promote full employment and equality of employment opportunities for all. It is in this light that Republic Act No. 8042, otherwise known as the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995, was enacted to implement this State policy.

But despite the major contribution of OFWs in the national economy (10% of the country's GNP in 2006), major differences in culture, conditions and the innate superiority complex of overseas employers have resulted in the abuse, discrimination and exploitation of our OFWs, most of whom are women. A vast majority of repatriated OFWs (42%) suffer from poor health conditions needing immediate medical attention or hospital confinement due to various physical or mental illnesses sustained abroad.

The proposed measure seeks to address this dilemma by establishing a hospital dedicated to overseas Filipino workers and their dependents. Moreover, the bill also aims to complement the present package of health services provided by OWWA so that a more comprehensive health care package can be extended to OFWs and their dependents.

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



DIOSDADO MACAPAGAL ARROYO
Second District, Camarines Sur



GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO
Second District, Pampanga

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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 "Migrant Workers Hospital Act of 2010."

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy* - It is the policy of the State to adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall endeavor to make essential goods, health and other social services available to all people at affordable cost. Further, the State shall protect the interest and promote the well-being of Filipino overseas workers including their families and dependents through the provision of social and welfare services.

SECTION 3. *Creation of Special Hospital*. - To carry out the above policy, there is hereby created a special hospital to be known as the Migrant Workers Hospital which shall be under the supervision and control of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA).

SECTION 4. *Objectives*. - To ensure the availability, accessibility and affordability of quality health care, the Migrant Workers Hospital shall:

- a) Provide for a comprehensive/total health care services to all migrant workers who are OWWA contributors including their dependents;
- b) Complement the existing package of services under the Health Care Program so as to include preventive, promotive, diagnostic, curative and rehabilitative programs;
- c) Conduct medical examination to ensure the physical and mental capability of all the would-be overseas Filipino workers duly covered by an approved job order; and
- d) Set-up a system that will effectively monitor the condition of patients and to generate relevant information and data in aid of policy formulation.

SECTION 5. *Administration and Composition of Board Members.* – Upon the effectivity of this Act, the powers and the administration of the Migrant Workers Hospital shall be vested in a Board, which shall be composed of the following members:

- a) The Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment as Ex-Officio Chairman;
- b) The Administrator of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration as Ex-Officio Vice-Chairman;
- c) The Secretary of the Department of Health as Ex-Officio Member;
- d) The Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development as Ex-Officio Member;
- e) The Administrator of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration as Ex-Officio Member; and
- f) Two (2) representatives from the OFWs sector (one from land-based and another from sea-based) as Members.

The two representatives from the OFWs sector shall be appointed by the President of the Republic of the Philippines from a list of nominees submitted by the Ex-Officio Chairman. The representatives appointed shall serve for a term of three (3) years without re-appointment.

SECTION 6. *Responsibilities and Powers.* - The Board of Directors of the Migrant Workers Hospital shall have the following responsibilities and powers:

- a) To formulate and implement measures and programs to attain the Migrant Workers Hospital's objectives and purposes as enunciated in Section 4 of this Act;

- b) To enter into agreements and contracts in connection with its establishment, maintenance, operations and objectives;
- c) To issue rules and regulations to carry out the objectives and purposes of this Act; and
- d) To perform such other duties and functions as may be provided by law.

SECTION 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - The Board shall adopt rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act within sixty (60) days from the date of its approval.

SECTION 8. *Appropriation.* - In addition to the seed money held in trust by the OWWA, the National Government shall contribute the amount necessary for the establishment and initial operation of the Migrant Workers Hospital which shall be taken from the National Treasury not otherwise appropriated. Subsequently, its appropriation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA).

SECTION 9. *Assistance from Government Offices, etc.* - The Migrant Workers Hospital may call upon any department, bureau, office, agency or instrumentality of the Government, including government owned or controlled corporations, for such assistance as it may need in the pursuit of its purposes and objectives.

SECTION 10. *Exemption from Donor's Taxes, Customs and Tariff Duties.* - All donations, contributions or endowments which may be made by persons or entities to the hospital and the importation of medical equipment and machineries, spare parts and other medical equipment not hereto mentioned used solely and exclusively for the Migrant Workers Hospital shall be exempt from income, gift, direct and indirect taxes, wharfage fees and other charges and restrictions.

SECTION 11. *Annual Report.* - The Migrant Workers Hospital shall render to the President of the Philippines, to the Senate and to the House of Representatives an annual report of its activities and recommendations.

SECTION 12. *Congressional Oversight Committee.* - A Congressional Oversight Committee, herein after referred to as the "Committee", is hereby constituted in accordance with the provisions of this Act. The Committee shall be composed of the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development and the Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs and four (4) additional members from each House to be designated by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, respectively. The committee shall, among others in aid of legislation:

- 1) Monitor and ensure the proper implementation of this Act;
- 2) Review the performance of the hospital: and

- 3) Review the proper implementation of the programs of the Hospital and the use of its fund.

In furtherance of the herein above cited objectives, the Committee is empowered to require the hospital to submit all pertinent information including but not limited to its performance data and its annual audited financial statements certified by the Commission on Audit.

SECTION 13. *Repealing Clause* - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations or part thereof deemed inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 14. *Effectivity Clause* - This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days from its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,