

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

15th Congress
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 1555

Introduced by Representative Roman T. Romulo
Lone District of Pasig City

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution provides that the "State shall afford full protection to labor, local and overseas, organized and unorganized, and promote full employment and equality of employment opportunities for all." Towards this end, the State must provide adequate and timely social, economic, legal, and health services to overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) or Filipino migrant workers.

Recognizing the significant contribution of Filipino migrant workers to the national economy through their foreign exchange remittances, the State must undertake measures to ensure that their health care needs are adequately addressed.

Through this proposed enactment, government hospitals are mandated to establish an "OFW ward" within their premises that is equivalent to an additional five (5) percent of their total bed capacity. This measure also provides the OFW the privilege of priority in admission to a government hospital that has reached its full capacity at the time the OFW seeks to be admitted.

The undersigned believes that through this proposed enactment, two (2) benefits can be achieved. First, if the health care needs of OFWs are properly addressed in government hospitals, they are able to recover from their illnesses quicker, allowing them to return to their foreign employment sooner. Second, OFWs are given a privilege in recognition of their valuable contribution and support to the national economy, for they are among the true, living heroes of our society.

For these reasons, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


ROMAN T. ROMULO

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**AN ACT TO ESTABLISH WARDS IN GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS
FOR THE HEALTH CARE NEEDS
OF OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS (OFWs)**

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

Section 1. All government hospitals shall establish a separate and exclusive ward within their premises to administer to the health care needs of overseas Filipino workers ("OFWs"), or "migrant workers," as defined by Sec. 3 (a) of R.A. No. 8042 ("Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipino Act of 1995").

Section 2. All government hospitals shall, for this purpose, construct or provide an additional five percent (5%) of their total number of bed capacity for establishment of an OFW ward.

Section 3. An OFW shall be entitled to admission to the OFW ward, provided he/she present a valid POEA identification card to the government hospital's administration or admission section. If the hospital has reached its full capacity at the time the OFW seeks to be admitted, he/she shall be granted the privilege of priority as soon as a bed becomes vacant.

Section 4. The privilege granted in section 3 shall be applicable to the OFW and to his qualified dependents.

Section 5. The funds necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be sourced from the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) Fund, in the amount of 10% of the OWWA Fund.

Section 6. Implementing Rules and Regulations – The Department of Health is hereby authorized to promulgate implementing rules and regulations of this Act.

Section 7. Repealing Clause – All laws, rules and regulations, and executive orders, or any part thereof, which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 8. Severability – In case any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, such declaration shall not affect the other provisions, which shall remain valid.

Section 9. Effectivity – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.