

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 3597

Introduced by **REP. CESAR V. SARMIENTO**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Public health care is one basic need that must be affordable, effective and convenient. It is enshrined in the 1987 Constitution of the Philippines that the "State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them." It is likewise guaranteed that "the State shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall endeavor to make essential goods, health and other services available to all people at affordable cost."

Republic Act No. 7160 also known as the Local Government Code of 1991 transferred the management and implementation of public health services in the hands of local governments in the belief that such move will improve delivery of public services since it is the local government that is more knowledgeable about the needs of their constituencies. As a result of such devolution, the quality and coverage of public health services deteriorated particularly in the poor provinces. According to data gathered by the Health Alliance for Democracy (HEAD), five out of 10 Filipinos die without receiving medical attention. The average hospital bill is three times the average monthly income of a worker. With the decreasing budget for health, the devolution of health services to cash-strapped provinces and municipalities, and the privatization of government hospitals, the quality and availability of the basic health services have become inaccessible especially to the poor and the less privileged.

Catanduanes is a third class province based on its income classification and its revenues are not sufficient to meet the required cash flow for the delivery of health services. Patients requiring higher medical care need to go to mainland Bicol or to Manila due to the lack of facilities in the hospitals in the province while patients who cannot afford the high cost of medical services have no choice but to wait for their health to wane without getting proper medical attention.

Based on the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



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AN ACT UPGRADING THE EASTERN BICOL MEDICAL CENTER (EBMC) IN VIRAC, CATANDUANES TO A TERTIARY LEVEL HOSPITAL ATTACHED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. The Eastern Bicol Medical Center (EBMC) in Virac, Catanduanes is hereby upgraded into a tertiary level hospital.

SECTION 2. The upgrading shall provide the provincial hospital in Virac, Catanduanes with the capability of a tertiary level hospital without increasing the hospital's bed capacity.

SECTION 3. Upon its upgrading, the Eastern Bicol Medical Center shall be under the direct control, supervision and management of the Department of Health.

SECTION 4. The Secretary of Health shall issue such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the purpose of the Act.

SECTION 5. The amount necessary for the initial implementation of the Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations for the Organizational Adjustment Fund. Thereafter, such sums as may be needed for their continued operation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,