

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

**15th CONGRESS
First Regular Session**

HOUSE BILL NO. 4582

Introduced by Representative ARNEL U. TY

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Nurses now comprise the second-largest group of professionals in the country, after teachers.

In the 30 months from June 2008 to December 2010 alone, a total of 500,766 nursing graduates took the licensure examinations administered by the Professional Regulation Commission. A total of 204,754 of them passed and became registered nurses (RNs).

The country now has tens of thousands of nursing graduates and RNs who are either totally unemployed or underemployed. Many of them are waiting for their travel papers and/or job offers from abroad.

Meanwhile, key foreign labor markets for Filipino nurses have also diminished. The lingering economic difficulties in the United States, for instance, have lessened both the demand for Filipinos nurses as well as their desire to seek employment there.

The total number of Filipino nurses who indicated their wish to work in America by taking for the first time the US NCLEX examination for RNs or licensed practical/vocational nurses nose-dived by 37 percent to just 9,789 in 2010 compared to 15,382 in 2009.

In the first quarter of 2011, the number of Filipino nurses who took the NCLEX for the first time plunged by another 52 percent to just 1,454 versus 3,024 in the same quarter in 2010.

To ease joblessness among Filipino nurses, create a pool of RNs with extra training and competencies (thus making them more attractive to foreign and domestic employers), and strengthen community health, the government launched the Nurses Assigned in Rural Service (NARS) in 2009.

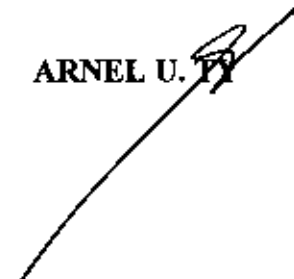
NARS mobilized 10,000 RNs to improve the delivery of badly needed healthcare services to the 1,000 poorest municipalities.

This bill seeks to revive, expand and make the NARS permanent under a new program, the Nurses in Urban and Rural Services (NURSE).

The NURSE recognizes the need to harness unemployed or underemployed RNs to provide additional health care services not just to the rural areas, but also to depressed urban communities, particularly the informal human settlements in Metro Manila and elsewhere.

To advance their welfare, commitment to service and professionalism, RNs engaged under the NURSE will also be entitled to considerably higher compensation not lower than the amount commensurate to Salary Grade 15. This is consistent with the mandate of the Philippine Nursing Act of 2002, or Republic Act No. 9173.

ARNEL U. TY



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**AN ACT
CREATING THE SPECIAL PROGRAM FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF NURSES IN
URBAN AND RURAL SERVICES (NURSE)**

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. - This Act shall be known as the "Nurses in Urban and Rural Services Program of 2011."

SECTION 2. Policy. - It is the policy of the State to protect and advance the right to health of the people, and to promote full employment.

SECTION 3. Creating the Special Program for the Employment of Nurses in Urban and Rural Services. - There is hereby established a Special Program for the Employment of Nurses in Urban and Rural Services, for the purpose of improving the delivery of public health care services to the poorest municipalities in the rural areas as well as underprivileged communities in the urban areas, while providing gainful employment to registered nurses and developing their professional competencies.

SECTION 4. Direction, Management and Administration. - The program shall be directed, managed and administered jointly by the Department of Labor and Employment, the Department of Health, and the Professional Regulation Commission in consultation with the Board of Nursing, with the Secretary of Labor and Employment as Program Director.

SECTION 5. Recruitment and Selection. - The recruitment and selection of nurses for employment under the program shall be the responsibility of the Department of Labor and Employment through its regional offices.

SECTION 6. Minimum Qualification of Nurses. - Nurses engaged under the program shall have the following minimum qualifications: Must not be over 35 years old, and must have a valid RN license issued by the Professional Regulation Commission.

SECTION 7. Rate of Deployment. - No less than 10,000 nurses shall be engaged and deployed for a six-month tour of duty every year under the program, with the first batch of 5,000 set out in the first semester, and the other 5,000 set out in the second semester.

SECTION 8. Stipend. - Nurses employed under the program shall be entitled to a monthly stipend equal to Salary Grade 15, consistent with the mandatory minimum entry-level pay for government nurses under the Philippine Nursing Act of 2002, or Republic Act No. 9173.

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SECTION 9. Certification. - A Certificate of Completion/Competency shall be issued jointly by the Department of Labor, Department of Health, and the Professional Regulation Commission, after an assessment of the additional competencies gained by the nurses employed under the program.

SECTION 10. Funding Source. - The amount necessary to implement the program under this Act shall be initially appropriated out of the funds of the National Treasury. Subsequent appropriations shall be provided by Congress in the annual budget of the Department of Labor and Employment under the General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 11. Implementing Rules and Regulation. - Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Health and the Professional Regulation Commission shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations, as may be necessary to ensure the efficient implementation of the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 12. Separability Clause. - Should any section or provision of this Act be held unconstitutional or invalid, such declaration shall not invalidate other provisions hereof.

SECTION 13. Repealing Clause. - All laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations, rules and regulations inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed and/or modified accordingly.

SECTION 14. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,