

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City

**FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
SECOND REGULAR SESSION**

42990-006627
House Bill No. _____



Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE JC RAHMAN A. NAVA**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Audiologists play an important role in our country's national health program. Audiologists are health care professionals who assess, treat and educate to prevent hearing and balance problems. They are trained to perform a variety of tests to determine the nature and degree of an individual's hearing and/or balance problems. They see people of all ages – babies, children and adults.

This bill seeks to recognize the important role audiologists play in our society through the following provisions, among others:

1. Creation of a Professional Regulatory Board of Audiology under the administrative supervision and control of the Professional Regulation Commission;
2. Licensure examination requirement for all applicants for registration for the practice of audiology and;
3. Guidelines and regulations involving the practice of audiology in the country.

To professionalize and regulate the practice of audiology in the country, which are the primary objectives of the bill, are in consonance with the greater role of the State to "protect and promote the right to health of the people" as mandated by Art. II, Sec. 15 of the 1987 Constitution.

Approval of this bill is thus earnestly sought.


JC RAHMAN A. NAVA

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**FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
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House Bill No. 6627

Introduced by **Representative JC Rahman A. Nava**

AN ACT REGULATING THE PRACTICE OF AUDIOLOGY CREATING FOR THIS PURPOSE A PROFESSIONAL REGULATORY BOARD OF AUDIOLOGY, UPGRADING AUDIOLOGICAL EDUCATION, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

ARTICLE I

TITLE, DECLARATION OF POLICY AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

SECTION 1. *Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Philippine Audiology Act of 2012".

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - The state recognizes the essential role of audiology as a profession in safeguarding and enhancing the health and general physical well-being of the citizenry. Hence, it shall develop a competent, globally competitive and well-rounded audiologists through honest, effective and credible licensure examinations and through regulatory measures, programs and activities that foster their professional growth. Audiological services shall therefor be promoted as a regular component of the primary health care system.

SEC. 3. *Defenition of Terms.* - As used in this Act, the following terms shall mean:

(a) *Audiology* is the science and art of hearing, whether normal or disordered, as a fundamental component of human communication behavior; the development and application of effective strategies leading to optimal use of sensory and oral expressive skills in hearing-impaired children and adults; analyzing and evaluating the auditory function through behavioral and psychological tests; selecting, prescribing and dispensing hearing aids, auditory assistive devices and their accessories and solutions, and similar appliances and devices; using educational techniques.

(b) *Audiometry* is the measurement of hearing, including many procedures and tests used to define type, degree and communicative consequences of hearing loss; utilizing clinical hearing tests to evaluate sensitivity and discrimination (acuity) aspects of audition;

including but not limited to tone and speech audiometry based on behavioral responses, electrophysiologic procedures, acoustic-immittance measures, loudness recruitment, loudness adaptation, and test of central auditory dysfunction.

(c) *Audiologist* is a natural person who, having satisfactorily completed an academic program leading to at least a bachelor's degree in audiology or its equivalent or higher degree, inclusive of at least three hundred (300) hours of supervised clinical experience followed by the equivalent of six months full time professional experience under the supervision of a certified audiologist, has passed the national board examination in Audiology administered by the Board of Audiology, and has been granted a Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC) in audiology and registered with the Professional Regulations Commission (PRC) as being qualified to practice audiology in the Philippines.

(d) *Audiologist in good standing* refers to a registered audiologist who is authorized to practice the profession in the Philippines by virtue of a valid certificate of registration and a valid professional license issued by the PRC for the purpose.

(e) *Audiometrician* is a natural person who has not satisfactorily completed an academic program leading to a bachelor's degree in audiology or its equivalent; and has not passed the national board examination in audiology administered by the Board of Audiology, but by virtue of accredited course work and clinical experience has been accredited by the Board of Audiology for the limited practice of Audiometry in the Philippines under the supervision of an audiologist in good standing.

(f) *Audiometrician in good standing* refers to a qualified audiometrician who by virtue of a valid certificate of accreditation in audiometry issued by the Board of Audiology for the purpose is authorized in the limited practice of audiometry in the Philippines under the supervision of an audiologist in good standing.

(g) *Certificate of Registration* refers to the document signed by the chairperson of the PRC and by the members of the Board of Audiology and bearing its seal, issued to an applicant who has satisfied the requirement for the practice of audiology. It shall serve as a proof that the registrant is qualified to practice the respective profession in the Philippines.

(h) *Professional License* refers to the renewable card issued by the PRC to a registered audiologist indicating that he/she is competent and authorized to practice audiology in the Philippines. Until the loss of its validity or its expiration, such license shall serve as evidence that its bearer is an audiologist or audiometrician in good standing.

(i) *Certificate of Accreditation* is a document signed by all the members of the Board of Audiology and bearing its seal, issued to an applicant who has satisfied the requirements for the limited practice of audiology in the Philippines under the supervision of an audiologist in good standing. It shall serve as proof that the person is accredited for such limited practice.

(j) *Code of Professional Ethics* refers to the sets of standards relating to the conduct, integrity and moral duties of audiologists, as prescribed by the Philippine Society of Audiology as duly integrated and accredited national organization of audiologists, and adopted and promulgated by the Board of Audiology upon approval by the PRC.

ARTICLE II

THE PRACTICE OF AUDIOLOGY

Section 4. *Acts Constituting the Practice of Audiology.* - Any of the following acts constitute the practice of audiology:

(a) The analysis and evaluation of human auditory function through the employment of clinical subjective and objective procedures and test to measure hearing and define the type, degree and communicative consequences of hearing loss; including the use of specific instruments, tools, equipment, implements, aids, apparatuses, machines, exercises and related devices, for the purpose of determining the condition, sensitivity, and discrimination of human hearing to correct and improve the same when not medically or surgically treatable, in accordance with subsections (b), (c), and (d) hereof;

(b) The selection, prescription and dispensing of hearing aids, auditory assistive devices and their accessories and solutions, and supplies for the purpose of correcting and treating defects, deficiencies, and abnormalities of audition that are not medically and surgically treatable;

(c) The use of educational techniques to enhance visual perception of speech and to improve auditory discrimination, developing and maintaining optimal speech and voice skills; conduct auditory exercises and hearing habilitation and rehabilitation, the provision of other measures, devices and procedures to aid, correct, habilitate, rehabilitate or relieve abnormalities of human audition and comfort except those that should be medically or surgically provided;

(d) The counselling of patients regarding educational, social or vocational concerns that may occur as a consequence of hearing impairment; and implementation of programs for hearing of conservation, and for the prevention of reduced auditory function;

(e) The establishment of offices, clinics, and similar places where audiological services are offered; and

(f) The collection of professional fees for performance of any acts mentioned in paragraphs (a), (b), (c), and (d) of this section.

Section 5. *Prohibition against Unauthorized Practice of Audiology.* - No person shall practice audiology as defined in Section 3 of this Act, nor perform any acts constituting the practice of audiology as set forth in Section 4 hereof, without having been first admitted to the practice of this profession under the provisions of this Act and its implementing rules and regulations; *Provided*, that this prohibition shall not apply to regularly licensed and duly registered physicians who have received post-graduate training in the diagnosis and treatment of hearing disorders and ear diseases; *Provided, however*, That the examination of the human ear and auditory apparatus by duly registered physicians in connection with the physical examination of patients shall not be considered as practice of audiology; *Provided, further*, That the evaluation and management of speech and voice functions and dysfunctions by speech pathologists, therapists, and phoniatrists shall be considered as practice of audiology; *Provided, furthermore*, That public health workers and health care providers trained and involved in the government's "universal newborn screening program for the prevention, early diagnosis and intervention of hearing loss" and other hearing

conservation programs may conduct only specific hearing acuity tests and hearing screening; *Provided, finally*, That audiometricians in good standing may only perform their limited duties and services under the supervision of audiologist in good standing.

Sec. 6. *Disclosure of Authority to Practice.* - An audiologist shall be required to indicate his/her professional license number and the date of its expiration in the documents he/she issues and signs in connection with the practice of his/her profession. He/she shall also display his/her certificate of registration in a conspicuous area of his/her clinic or office.

ARTICLE III

THE PROFESSIONAL REGULATORY BOARD OF AUDIOLOGY

Sec. 7. *The Professional Regulatory Board of Audiology.* - There is hereby created a Professional Regulatory Board of Audiology, hereinafter referred as the Board, composed of five (5) members who shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines, upon the recommendation of the PRC, from a list of ten (10) nominees submitted by the duly integrated and accredited national organization of audiologists.

Sec. 8. *Qualification of the Chairperson and the Members of the Professional Regulatory Board of Audiology.* - The Chairperson and members of the Board shall, at the time of the appointment and for the course of their term, possess the following qualifications:

- (a) A natural born citizen of the Philippines;
- (b) At least thirty-five (35) years of age;
- (c) Possess good moral character;
- (d) A duly registered audiologist in good standing, except in the case of the first members of the Board who shall automatically be conferred a valid certificate of registration as Audiologists upon appointment to the Board;
- (e) In active practice of the profession for at least ten (10) years prior to his or her appointment: *Provided*, That for the purpose of creating the initial Board, an active practice of the profession for at least five (5) years will suffice; *Provided, also*, That a person who is a member of a faculty, whether full time, part time, or lecturer of any school, college or university where a regular course of audiology is taught, or who has a pecuniary interest, directly or indirectly in such an institution, must forego of his/her membership in the faculty or relinquish his or her interest in said institution before or upon taking his/ her oath as member of the Board: *Provided, further*, That an incumbent officer of the Philippine Society of Audiology or any audiologic association, is disqualified from concurrently being appointed to or serving in the Board.

Sec. 9. *Term of Office.* - The members of the Board shall hold office for a non-renewable term of five (5) years starting from the date of appointment until their successor shall have been appointed and duly qualified: *Provided, however*, That the first appointees

of the Board shall hold office as follows: the Chairperson for five (5) years and the four (4) other members for a fixed term of four (4), three (3), two (2), and one (1) year/s, such that the term of one of the member shall be due to expire every year. Thereafter, one member shall be appointed for a full term every year and such member, in the last year of his term, shall automatically become the chairperson of the Board. Vacancies brought about by reasons other than the expiration of term shall be filled for the unexpired portion of the term only.

Sec. 10. *Removal and Suspension of Board Members.* - Any member of the Board, after having been given the opportunity to defend himself/herself in a proper administrative investigation conducted by the PRC, may be removed by the President of the Philippines for neglect of duty, incompetence, malpractice, or unprofessional, unethical, immoral or dishonorable conduct. During the process of investigation, the President of the Philippines may suspend such member under investigation for a period of not more than sixty (60) days and appoint a temporary member in his place.

Sec. 11. *Compensation of Board Members.* - The members of the Board shall each receive a compensation in accordance with the rules and regulation of the Professional Regulations Commission.

Sec. 12. *Functions and Power of the Board.* - The board is hereby vested with the authority to:

- (a) Promulgate the rules and regulations for the practice of audiology, subject to the approval of the PRC and in accordance with the provisions of this Act;
- (b) Administer and enforce the rules and regulations specified in the preceding subsection;
- (c) Determine, prepare, adopt, issue or amend the syllabi and contents of, and questions for licensure examinations, adopt measures to insure the integrity thereof, correct and rate the examination papers and submit the results thereof to the PRC;
- (d) Formulate and oversee, in consultation and coordination with the PRC, guidelines for the proper conduct of licensure examinations and the registration of audiologists as well as the accreditation of audiometricians;
- (e) Issue, suspend, revoke and reissue certificates of registration of qualified audiologists and renew their professional licenses and issue, suspend, revoke, and reissue certificates of accreditation of audiometricians;
- (f) Impose reasonable requirements and conditions, such as attendance in continuing education activities and programs, for the renewal of an audiologist's license to practice and for the purpose of upgrading the professional competence of audiologists and audiometricians;
- (g) Maintain a registry of audiologists and audiometricians in good standing;
- (h) Adopt, promulgate and disseminate the Code of Ethics for the practice of audiology in the Philippines;
- (i) Administer oaths in connection with the implementation of this Act;

(j) Conduct hearings and investigations to resolve complaints against practitioners of audiology for malpractice, unethical and unprofessional conduct, and violations of this Act or its implementing rules and regulations, and in connection therewith, issue sub poena ad testificandum and sub poena duces tecum and punish with contempt persons obstructing, impeding and/or otherwise interfering with the the conduct of such proceedings;

(k) Conduct ocular inspections of establishments and/or premises where audiological services are offered to ascertain that professional standards are complied with;

(l) Upon application, to issue an order enjoining or abating the illegal practice of audiology by unqualified persons;

(m) Impose fines and penalties after due process and in accordance with the provisions of this Act, for causes provided for by law or by the rules and regulations promulgated thereof;

(n) Evaluate periodically the status of audiological education and recommend and/or adopt measures to upgrade and maintain its high standards; and

(o) Study the conditions affecting the practice of audiology in all parts of the Philippines, and whatever necessary, adopt such measures as may be deemed proper for the maintenance of good ethics and high professional standards of audiologic practice.

Sec. 13. *Quorum in Board Meetings.* - The attendance of three (3) members shall constitute a quorum for the Board to officially transact business.

Sec. 14. *Votes Required in Administrative Cases.* - To render a decision in an administrative case for unethical practice, malpractice, immorality, dishonesty, and related charges affecting the professional fitness and integrity of an audiologist or audiometrician, the vote of three (3) members must be obtained: *Provided*, That in case members are disqualified to vote by virtue of their relation to or interest in any of the parties or voluntarily inhibits themselves from participating in the proceedings, the Board shall designate, with the approval of the Commission, an audiologist in good standing who is respected in the audiological community for their probity and integrity to sit in the Board, participate in the proceedings and vote on the case.

Sec. 15. *Supervision of the Board and Custody of its Records.* - The members of the Board shall be under the general supervision of the PRC. All records, including examination papers, examination results, minutes of deliberations, records of administrative cases and investigation of the Board shall be kept by the said Commission.

Sec. 16. *Annual Report.* - The Board shall, at the end of each calendar year, submit to the Commission, an annual report of its activities and proceedings during the year. Other information or data may be requested by the Commission as often as may be necessary and practicable.

ARTICLE IV THE AUDIOLOGY BOARD EXAMINATION

Sec. 17. *Licensure Examination.* - Every applicant seeking to be registered as an audiologist shall undergo an examination as provided in this Act. Examinations for the practice of audiology or limited practice of audiometry in the Philippines shall be given by the Board at least once every year in such places and dates as the PRC may designate.

Sec. 18. *Scope of Examination.* - The Board of Audiology shall prescribe the scope and prepare the contents of the licensure examinations. In the discharge of this function, the Board shall take into account recent developments in audiology and audiometry as well as the academic standards imposed by the Commission on Higher Education on educational institutions which offer a course in audiology.

Sec. 19. *Requirements for Examination of Applicants.* - To be eligible to take the licensure examination in audiology, the applicant must be:

(a) A Filipino citizen;

(b) Of good moral character;

(c) A holder of at least the degree of Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or Bachelor of Science (B. Sc.) in Audiology or its equivalent or higher degree (such as Masters in Clinical Audiology (M. Clin. Aud.), Masters of Audiology (M.Aud.), Doctor of Audiology (Aud. D.), Doctor of Philosophy in Audiology (Ph. D.), Doctor of Science in Audiology (D. Sc.), obtained from a school, college, university or institution duly accredited or recognized by the government, with coursework inclusive of the following minimum basic subject areas: mathematics, human biology, chemistry, biochemistry, physics, psychology, sociology, history, English and Filipino; and the following Audiology major subject areas: anatomy and physiology of speech and hearing, introduction to disorder and of speech and hearing process (pathophysiology), introduction to audiology, hearing loss and audiometry, normal speech and language acquisition and development, introduction to language and communication disorders, psychology of language, clinical methods in audiology, aural habilitation, rehabilitation and amplification, Philippine sign language, audiology ethics and jurisprudence, audiology economics and practice management, environmental and public health audiology, pediatric audiology, audiology practicum one and two and audiology research methods.

Sec. 20. *Minimum Passing Level.* - In order that the candidate may be considered to have successfully passed the examination, he or she must have obtained a general average of at least seventy-five percent (75%) in all subjects, with no rating below fifty percent (50%) in any subject.

Sec. 21. *Report of the Result of the Examination.* - The Board shall report the ratings obtained by each candidate to the PRC within sixty (60) days after the last examination day, unless extended by the Commission. The PRC shall cause the publication of the names of successful candidates in alphabetical order, without ratings obtained by each, within sixty (60) days of the date the Commission receives the aforementioned report from the Board.

Sec. 22. *Additional Requirement for Reexamination.* - Any applicant who, for the third time, fail to pass the Board examination shall not be allowed to take the next succeeding examination without submitting to the Board proof that he or she has taken a refresher course in a duly accredited institute.

ARTICLE V REGISTRATION AND LICENSURE OF AUDIOLOGISTS

Sec. 23. *Oath of Audiologists.*- All successful examinees shall be required to take their oath before the Board or before any person authorized to administer oaths prior to the issuance of the certificate of registration: *Provided, however,* That the applicant is not disqualified under any of the provisions in section 24 hereof.

Section 24. *Disqualification.* - The following applicants shall not be allowed to take their oath as audiologists nor issued certificates of registration:

- (a) Those who do not possess the qualifications set forth in Section 19 of this Act;
- (b) Those who fail to pass the Audiology Board licensure examination;
- (c) Those who have been convicted by final judgment of any crime involving moral turpitude by any court;
- (d) Those who have been found guilty by the Board of immoral or dishonorable conduct;
- (e) Those who have been declared to be of unsound mind.

Such fact of disqualification shall be communicated by the Board to the applicant by written statement, which statement shall form part of the records of the Board.

Sec. 25. *Registration.* - The PRC shall register the successful examinees who have taken their oath and thereafter grant them professional licenses to practice audiology. The certificate of registration shall be considered as evidence that the registrant is qualified to practice audiology in the Philippines.

Sec. 26. *Registration Without Taking Licensure Examination.* - A person who possess pertinent qualifications listed below pursuant to the provisions of this Act may be registered without examination:

- (a) Doctoral, masters, or bachelors degree in Audiology from a recognized institution with at least three (3) years of teaching Audiology courses and/or audiology practice in the Philippines for the same period; or
- (b) A duly-registered Doctor of Medicine in the Philippines and fully certified Diplomate of the Philippine Board of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery with at least five (5) years of clinical experience in the practice of audiology in the Philippines;

(c) Has passed at least eighteen (18) units of tertiary level (doctoral, masteral or baccalaureate) courses in Audiology and had at least seven (7) years of clinical experience in audiology.

Provided, That the applicant files with the Board within three (3) years after its creation, an application for registration, issuance of certificate of Registration and Professional Identification Card by submitting his or her credentials showing that the applicant was a member of good standing in the Philippine Society of Audiology for three (3) years before the effectivity of this Act.

Sec. 27. *Accreditation.* - The Board of Audiology shall grant certificates of accreditation for the limited practice of audiometry to successful examinees. It shall serve as proof that the person is accredited for the limited practice of audiometry in the Philippines under the supervision of an audiologist in good standing.

Sec. 28. *Revocation of Certificates and Suspension of Professional Licenses.* - The Board may, after giving proper notice and hearing to the party concerned, revoke an audiologist's certificate of registration or suspend his/her license to practice for any unprofessional or unethical conduct, malpractice, or violation of any of the provisions of this Act or its rules and regulations, or upon the conviction of the audiologist of a crime involving moral turpitude. The same applies to an audiometrician's certificate of accreditation.

Sec. 29. *Appeals.* - The revocation of a certificate or suspension of a professional license by the Board shall become final unless appealed at the PRC within fifteen (15) days from receipt of the decision.

Sec. 30. *Reinstatement, Reissuance or Replacement of Certificates.* - The Board may, upon application and for reasons deemed proper and sufficient, reinstate any suspended certificate of registration or accreditation, or issue another certificate in lieu of one previously revoked, and in so doing it may, in its discretion, exempt the applicant from taking another examination.

A new certificate to replace any certificate lost, destroyed or mutilated may be issued subject to the rules that may be implemented by the Board.

Sec. 31. *Renewal of Professional Licenses.* - All licenses shall be renewable every three (3) years and shall be considered renewed only upon satisfying the requirements imposed by the Board, such as attendance in continuing education programs and payment of corresponding fees as may be fixed by the Board in accordance with the schedule of fees fixed by the PRC.

ARTICLE VI AUDIOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Sec. 32. *The Technical Panel on Audiological Education.* - To attain the objective of upgrading audiological education in the Philippines, the Commission on Higher Education, pursuant to Section 12 of Republic Act No. 7722 shall, within sixty (60) days after the approval of this Act, convene and organize a technical panel on audiological education. For this purpose, senior practitioners, specialists, academicians in the field of audiology and

a representative from the accredited national organization of audiologists shall be appointed and tapped to assist the following:

- (a) setting a minimum standard curriculum for the study of audiology to be implemented in all schools offering audiology as an undergraduate course and degree;
- (b) Establishing teaching standards, including the qualifications of members of the faculty of schools and colleges of audiology;
- (c) Monitoring the progress and program on the study of audiology and undertaking measures for the attainment of a high quality of audiologic education in the country; and
- (d) Evaluation periodically the performance of educational institutions offering audiological education for the purpose of granting accreditation and incentives as well as for the imposition of sanctions when warranted.

ARTICLE VII PROHIBITED ACTS AND PENALTIES

Sec. 33. *Prohibited Acts.* - The following acts are prohibited:

- (a) Giving false or forged evidence of any kind to the Board or to any member thereof for the purpose of obtaining a certificate of registration or a professional license;
- (b) Assumption, use or advertisement by a person, not holding a valid certificate of registration and a valid professional license in accordance with this Act, of a description, in connection with his name or title tending to convey the impression that he or she is a duly registered audiologist;
- (c) Any form of advertisement in media outlets giving information and impression to the public that the particular audiologist is better than others, is collecting lower professional fees or selling cheaper hearing aids or devices;
- (d) Engaging in an unauthorized practice of audiology as defined in Section 5 of this Act; and
- (e) Violation by any person, whether natural or juridical, of any of the provisions of this Act and the rules and regulations promulgated for its effective implementation.

Sec. 34. *Penal Provisions.* - The Commission of any of the prohibited acts listed in the immediately preceding section shall be punished with imprisonment of not less than one (1) year but not more than eight (8) years, or a fine of not less than fifty thousand pesos (P50,000.00) but not more than one hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00), or both, at the discretion of the court.

In addition, the administrative penalties specified in Section 28 hereof shall be imposed whenever applicable.

If the violation is committed by an association, partnership, corporation or any other institution, the managing officers and other persons responsible for its commission shall be liable for the penalties provided for in this Act.

ARTICLE VIII PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL STANDARDS

Sec. 35. *Foreign Reciprocity.* - No foreigner shall be admitted to the audiology board examinations unless he/she proves in the manner prescribed by the Rules of Court that by specific provision of law, the country of which he/she is a citizen, subject or national, either admits Filipino citizens to the practice of audiology without restriction, or allow them to practice audiology after an examination on terms of strict and absolute equality with citizens, subjects or nationals of this country, including the unconditional recognition of prerequisite degrees prescribed by the Commission on Higher Education: *Provided, however,* That the Board upon approval by the PRC, may grant a special permit to a foreign audiologist to practice the profession in this country whether or not reciprocity exists between his or her country and the Philippines and under such conditions as may be determined by the Board, if such foreigner is internationally known to be outstanding expert in the profession or a well-known specialist in any of its branches, and that his/her services will promote the advancement of the profession in the Philippines. The Board is also hereby authorized to prescribe, upon approval by the PRC, additional requirements or grant certain privileges to foreigners, seeking registration in the Philippines if the same privileges are granted to or some additional requirements are required of citizens of the Philippines in acquiring the same certificate in his country.

Sec. 36. *Rules and Regulations.* - The Board shall set professional standards for the practice of audiology in the Philippines and adopt such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act, subject to the approval of the PRC. Such standards, rules and regulations shall take effect thirty (30) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or any newspaper of general circulation.

Sec. 37. *Integration of Audiologists.* - In order for every audiologist to contribute to his/her profession and to bear his/her share of professional responsibilities, all audiologist shall be encouraged to join and be integrated into one national organization which shall be recognized by the Board and the PRC. Every audiologist, upon registration with the Board, may become a member of the integrated national organization. Those who have been registered with the Board before the effectivity of this Act may register as member of the integrated organization within three (3) years after said effectivity.

Sec. 38. *Purposes.* - The integrated national organization of audiologists shall promulgate the Code of Ethics for the practice of the profession, define the professional responsibilities of its members, ensure adherence to said professional ethics and responsibilities, improve the standards of the profession and enable all audiologists to discharge their public responsibility more effectively.

Sec. 39. *Membership Fees and Dues.* - All members shall be subject to the payment of reasonable fees and dues for the effective discharge of the purposes of the integrated national organization. An audiologist shall receive the benefits and privileges appurtenant to his membership only upon payment of the required membership fees and dues.

Sec. 40. Other Organizations. - The integration of audiologists into one national organization shall not prohibit the creation of other associations of audiologists organized by individual audiologists themselves.

Sec. 41. Code of Professional Ethics. - The Board shall adopt the Professional Code of Ethics promulgated by the integrated national organization of audiologists: *Provided*, That such Code provides that it is the duty of an audiologist to:

- (a) Consider as his/her primary responsibility the auditory welfare of the public;
- (b) Promote the best possible standard of professional care;
- (c) Enhance continuously his/her theoretical and practical proficiency;
- (d) Render his/her service with equal diligence to all regardless of race, creed and status;
- (e) Respect the confidential nature of information concerning those he/she serves; and
- (f) Refer for medical or other professional attention where the need is indicated.

The Board shall also distribute the Code of Ethics of the Audiological Profession in the Philippines to all new audiologists during their oath taking.

Any act or omission which violates this Code shall be considered as unethical conduct and shall be suspended or prohibited from the practice of audiology, in accordance with Section 28 of this Act.

ARTICLE IX MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Sec. 42. Funding Provision. - The Chairperson of the Commission shall include in the Commission's program the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

Sec. 43. Assistance of Law Enforcement Agencies. - Any law enforcement agency shall upon call or request of the Commission or Board, render assistance in enforcing this Act including all the rules and regulations promulgated thereunder by prosecuting the violators thereof in accordance with the law and Rules of Court.

Sec. 44. Implementing Rules and Regulations. - Within sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this Act, subject to the approval of the Commission, the Board shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations in coordination with the accredited and integrated national organization to implement the provision of this Act which shall be effective fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or two newspapers of general circulation.

Sec. 45. *Separability Clause.* - If any of the provision of this Act shall at any time be found to be unconstitutional or invalid, the remainder thereof not affected by such declaration shall remain in full force and effect.

Sec. 46. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, rules or regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Sec. 47. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or two (2) newspaper of national circulation.

Approved,