

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

House Bill No. 6708



Introduced by Representatives
DIOSDADO MACAPAGAL ARROYO and GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO

AN ACT
CREATING THE PHILIPPINE MEDICAL ACADEMY AND ESTABLISHING THE
PHILIPPINE MEDICAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM AND APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR¹

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It is expressly stated in Section 12, Article XII (Social Justice and Human Rights) of the Constitution that: *"The State shall establish and maintain an effective food and drug regulatory system and undertake appropriate health manpower development and research, responsive to the country's health needs and problems."*

Reports are rife that hospitals in rural areas in Visayas and Mindanao face a crisis and even imminent closure because of the lack of doctors. Even prestigious medical institutions find it difficult to attract fresh graduates to fill up slots for doctors. The government has acknowledged the reality that, indeed, the country is facing an alarming shortage of medical doctors and other medical professionals.

The cost of medical studies has become so prohibitive that it has become beyond the reach of Filipino families even those belonging to the upper middle class. The situation has been aggravated by doctors taking up nursing and leaving the country for more lucrative jobs abroad.

¹ This is a counterpart measure to Senate Bill No. 2141 filed by the Honorable Ralph G. Recto during the First Regular Session of the present 15th Congress.

Since medical doctors constitute the core of a country's public health service system, the shortage of doctors severely prejudices the capacity of the government to deliver timely, adequate, competent and affordable medical and health care services to our people, especially the poor who direly need such services but can hardly afford them, and whose only access to such services is through the public health service system.

Thus, there is an urgent need to create a steadily expanding pool of medical doctors to strengthen and expand the core of the public health service system through institutional mechanisms and programs that will not only enable a greater number of qualified and public-service oriented young people to pursue medical education but also systematically and effectively ensure their integration into the public health service system in such manner that would harness their talents within an optimum period of time for the benefit of our country and people.

This bill seeks to address that need by creating a Philippine Medical Academy and establishing a Philippine Medical Scholarship and Service Program.

The Academy shall provide the institutional mechanism for the envisioned sustained human resource development for the Philippine public health care system. The scholarship program shall provide the financial and other educational resource support mechanisms for the pursuit of studies in the field of medicine by deserving and qualified young people. The University of the Philippines, through its College of Medicine, shall serve as the institutional core or principal medical educational institution within which grantees or scholars of the program shall pursue their medical training and studies. Other colleges and universities nationwide shall be accredited to serve as adjunct medical educational institutions to provide medical training to scholars.

The government shall provide the physical, technical and financial resources to equip, man, and develop the U.P. College of Medicine as the institutional core of the Philippine Medical Academy. It shall also provide funds to pay for all the necessary expenses such as tuition, matriculation and all other school fees, prescribed textbooks and other educational supplies and equipments, board and lodging expenses, clothing and uniform allowances, traveling expenses and other related miscellaneous living allowances of qualified entrants to the Philippine Medical Academy and recipients of the scholarship program.

It is envisioned that a scholar shall undergo higher post-graduate internship in a public health and medical institution which shall be considered as part of the mandatory public service. Upon passing the medical board examination, the scholar shall commence integration into the public health service system and shall accordingly be given the appropriate rank and salary.

Such integration into the public service system shall be required for a period equivalent to at least two (2) years for each year of scholarship benefits received.

The Academy, the Scholarship and Service programs shall be administered by a Board empowered to formulate and implement policies, rules and regulations, and all such other activities for the effective management and development of the programs.

We, therefore, enjoin our colleagues to ensure this bill's expeditious passage into law.



DIOSDADO MACAPAGAL ARROYO
Second District, Camarines Sur



GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO
Second District, Pampanga

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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 "Philippine Medical Academy and Scholarship Act of 2012."

SECTION 2. *Declaration of policy* – It is the policy of the State to undertake health manpower development responsive to the country's health service needs. Towards this end, the State shall establish mechanisms inclusive of creating educational institutions and scholarship programs to enable deserving and qualified individuals to pursue education and training in the field of medicine, and shall formulate and implement such policies and programs to systematically integrate these individuals, upon qualifying as doctors of medicine, into the public health care system.

SECTION 3. *The Philippine Medical Academy.* – There shall be established a Philippine Medical Academy (PMA) which shall be the primary educational institutional mechanism for the sustained human resource development for the Philippine Public Health Care System. The government, on its own and, when feasible, in partnership with other lawful entities in the public and private sectors, shall provide and undertake measures to generate the

necessary financial, technical, physical and other resources needed to efficiently and effectively man, equip, manage and develop the University of the Philippines - College of Medicine as the institutional Core of the Philippine Medical Academy. Other colleges and universities upon fulfillment of prescribed conditions may be accredited and integrated into the Philippine Medical Academy as adjunct educational institutions that will provide training and education in the field of medicine to qualified entrants to the Philippine Medical Academy.

SECTION 4. *Philippine Medical Academy Scholarship Board (PMASB).* – There is hereby created a Philippine Medical Academy and Scholarship Board (PMASB) which shall administer the Philippine Medical Academy, the Scholarship and Service Program and shall be empowered to formulate, consolidate, integrate, systematize and implement all policies, rules and regulations and programs related thereto and intended to enhance the effectiveness thereof.

The PMASB shall be composed of the Chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education as Chairman of the Board; and as members: (1) the Secretary of Education; (2) the Secretary of Health; (3) the Secretary of Budget and Management; (4) the President of the University of the Philippine System; (5) the Dean of the College of Medicine of the University of the Philippines; (6) the Executive Director of the PMASB Secretariat; and (7) the Chairpersons of the Committees on Health and Higher Education of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The members of the PMASB shall be entitled to reasonable amounts of per diems, representation, travel and transportation allowances.

SECTION 5. *Functions of the Board.* – The PMASB shall have the following functions:

- a) Determine, formulate and promulgate the appropriate policies, measures, rules and regulations necessary to operate, manage, maintain, and enhance the effectiveness of the PMA and the scholarship and services programs integral to its operations;
- b) Establish cooperative and coordinative linkages with other educational and related institutions in the public and private sectors to ensure the effective operation, management and development of the PMA and the scholarship and services programs;
- c) Approve the accreditation of medical colleges and universities who will be adjunct educational institutions and who in addition to the University of the Philippines - Philippine General Hospital will accept medical scholars to their respective institutions;
- d) Prescribe such tests, standards and criteria for the selection of medical scholars and the relevant and appropriate terms and conditions governing

the scholarship grants and the integration of qualified medical scholars into the public health service system;

e) Determine the various expenses to be covered by the scholarship, and approve the schedule of payments thereof to medical scholars from such sums appropriated by law and other funds available for the purpose;

f) Design the staffing pattern, salaries and other compensation of officials and personnel of the Secretariat subject to the approval of the Department of Budget and Management and in accordance with the Salary Standardization Law;

g) Conduct regular meetings as often as may be decided by the Board and special meetings when necessary as may be called by the Chairman of the Board; and

h) Perform such other duties and functions as may be assigned by the President of the Philippines.

SECTION 6. *Secretariat.* – There shall be a Secretariat to provide administrative and technical assistance to the PMASB. It shall be headed by an Executive Director who shall perform duties and responsibilities as may be determined and delegated by the PMASB. The support staff of the Secretariat shall be recruited preferably from qualified professionals from the academe and medical profession.

SECTION 7. *Medical Scholarship.* – There shall be an annual selection through appropriate examinations and screening processes of those who shall be admitted to the Philippine Medical Academy to be known as Medical Academy Scholars. The candidates shall come from among qualified graduating students or graduates of appropriate courses in colleges and universities nationwide. The qualified and selected scholars shall be granted scholarship in a medical course and shall cover expenses for, among others, tuition, matriculation and other school fees; prescribed textbooks, supplies and equipment; board and lodging expenses; clothing and uniform allowances; traveling expenses and other related miscellaneous living allowances: *Provided*, That at least five (5) candidates per region, or when practicable, one (1) candidate from every province and city shall be chosen to participate in the annual selection: *Provided, further*, That at least fifty (50) Medical Academy Scholars shall be selected annually.

SECTION 8. *Qualifications of Candidates.* – Candidates for admission into the Philippine Medical Academy and for medical scholarship grants shall possess the following minimum qualifications:

a) Must belong to the top thirty per centum (30%) of their respective graduating classes and must be completing or already completed

undergraduate courses identified by the PMASB as a prerequisite course to the pursuit of studies in the field of medicine;

b) Family and or personal incomes are not sufficient to finance their education in the field of medicine: *Provided*, That those who are financially capable and are willing to serve in public health and medical institutions after graduation may be accepted: *Provided, further*, That they do not compose more than 10 percent of the total scholars for a particular year;

c) Must be not more than twenty-five (25) years of age and a natural-born citizen of the Philippines;

d) The PMASB shall determine such other qualifications as it deems necessary for the purpose.

SECTION 9. *General Conditions for Admission to the Philippine Medical Academy and for the Scholarship Grant.* – A medical academy scholar shall be accepted to the Academy and the programs and shall receive and continue to enjoy the benefits of the scholarship until the completion of the course, subject to the following conditions:

a) He/She shall pass the entrance/admission examinations and related requirements of PMASB and the medical school the scholar intends to enroll;

b) The scholar shall carry the full load of subjects prescribed per semester by the medical school, and shall, under no circumstance, drop a course which will result in under-loading; and

c) The scholar may be allowed, for valid reasons preventing his enrolment, to defer availing of the scholarship and file a leave of absence for a period not exceeding one school year.

d) The scholar shall sign an agreement stating the terms and conditions of the scholarship on a form prescribed by the Philippine Medical Academy Scholarship Board;

e) He/She shall repay the full cost of scholarship and related benefits received, and the scholarship shall be terminated in the event the grantee accepts another scholarship from other government or private agencies or entities; and

f) The full cost of scholarship and related benefits received shall be paid by the scholar in case of failure to complete the medical course without valid cause as may be determined by PMASB: *Provided*, That, if the terminated medical scholar completes another course and qualifies as an

allied medical service practitioner, he/she may choose, instead of repayment of scholarship costs, to render public service and be integrated into the public health and medical service system.

SECTION 10. *Medical Service Program.* – The scholar shall, pursuant to the agreement provided in Section 6 hereof, render services and be integrated into the public health and medical service system as medical doctor, with the appropriate rank and salary upon passing the medical board examination: *Provided*, That such service and integration in the public service shall be mandatory for a period equivalent to at least two (2) years for every year of scholarship availed: *Provided, further*, That the scholar, when he/she obtains a very satisfactory performance rating, shall be entitled to salary step increases at least every two years in the service: *Provided, finally*, That the scholar shall undertake post graduate internship in a public health or medical institution that shall ensure his acceptance and such internship shall be part of the mandatory service and integration into the public health and medical service system.

SECTION 11. *Appropriation.* – The sum of One Hundred Million Pesos (P100,000,000.00) for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the Contingent Fund and over-all savings of the Executive Branch. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary shall be included in the subsequent annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 12. *Donations, Grants, etc.* – The Board may accept donations, legacies, grants, and other contributions to form part of the Medical Scholarship Fund. *Provided*, that such donations, legacies, grants, and other contributions shall be exempt from taxation and shall be allowable deductions for income tax purposes. Proceeds from at least two (2) draws of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes per year shall also be allocated to finance the PMA, the Scholarship and the Services Programs.

SECTION 13. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Chairman of the Commission on Higher Education, in coordination with the Secretary of Health, the President of the University of the Philippine System and the Chairpersons of the Committees on Health and Higher Education of the Senate and the House of Representatives shall issue such rules and regulations as may be necessary for the implementation of this Act within sixty (60) days from the effectivity thereof.

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

Approved,