

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2774



Introduced by: Hon. Angelina "Helen" D.L. Tan, M.D.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article XII, Section 12 of the Constitution provides 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 (emphasis supplied).

The Department of Health has identified the midwives as the link between health service delivery and the community in the reduction of maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality.

Rural health midwives are considered as the frontline health workers in the far flung areas of the country and have progressed to become multi-task personnel in the delivery of healthcare services, amidst migration of other healthcare professionals.

They are badly needed in areas that have not performed well in terms of facility-based deliveries, fully immunized child and contraceptive prevalence rates. By augmenting health staff to priority government units, the DOH may improve maternal and child health and attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Hence, the government has to ensure a constant supply of competent midwives and to deliver their services to the people in dire need.

This bill seeks to address the inequitable distribution of midwives and equip them for facility-based Basic Emergency Obstetric practice by establishing a medical and midwifery scholarship and placement program. The scholarship program shall provide the financial and other educational resource support mechanisms for the pursuit of studies in midwifery.

In view of thereof, immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


ANGELINA "HELEN" D.L. TAN, M.D.
4th District, Quezon

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2774

Introduced by: Hon. Angelina "Helen" D.L. Tan, M.D.

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A MIDWIFERY SCHOLARSHIP AND PLACEMENT
PROGRAM AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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 "Midwifery Scholarship and Placement Program Act of 2013".

SEC. 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 establishing scholarship programs to enable deserving and qualified individuals to pursue education and training in the field of midwifery, and shall formulate and implement such policies and programs to systematically integrate these individuals, upon qualifying as midwives, into the public health service system.

SEC. 3. *Midwifery Scholarship and Placement Program (MSPP).* - There shall be an annual selection through appropriate examinations and screening processes of those who shall be admitted to the Midwifery Scholarship and Placement Program (MSPP). 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 midwifery 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 province shall be chosen to participate in the annual selection.

The scholar shall render services and be integrated into the public health service system after obtaining the midwives' Certificate of Registration and License, with the appropriate rank and salary: *Provided*, That such service and integration in the public health service system shall be mandatory for a period equivalent to at least two (2) years for every year of scholarship availed.

The Department of Health shall identify those areas of the country that have not performed well in terms of facility based deliveries and fully immunized child and contraceptive prevalence rates and give priority to these areas in the deployment of midwives.

SEC. 4. *Qualifications of Candidates.* - Candidates for the MSPP shall possess the following minimum qualifications:

- a. Must belong to the top thirty per centum (30%) of their respective graduating classes;
- b. Family and or personal incomes are not sufficient to finance their education in the field of midwifery: *Provided*, That those who are financially capable and are willing to serve in public health institutions may be accepted: *Provided, further*, That they do not compose more than ten percent (10%) 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 DOH shall determine such other qualifications as it deems necessary for the purpose.

SEC. 5. *General Conditions for Admission to the MSPP.* - A midwifery scholar shall be accepted to the MSPP 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 shall pass the entrance/admission examinations and related requirements of the DOH and the school the scholar intends to enroll;
- b. The scholar shall carry the full load of subjects prescribed per semester by the 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 DOH;
- e. He 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 midwifery course without valid cause as may be determined by the DOH.

SEC. 6. *Secretariat.* - The Department of Health, through its Secretary, may create a Secretariat to provide administrative and technical assistance to effectively and efficiently implement the MSPP. It shall perform duties and responsibilities as may be determined and delegated by the Secretary of Health. The support staff as may be created shall be recruited preferably from qualified professionals from the academe and medical profession.

SEC. 7. *Appropriation.* - The sum of Fifty Million (P50,000,000.00) pesos for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the Contingent Fund and overall savings of the Executive Branch. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary shall be included in the subsequent annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 8. *Donations, Grants, and other contributions.* - The DOH may accept donations, legacies, grants, and other contributions to form part of the Midwifery 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 Program.

SEC. 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - The Secretary of the Department of Health, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education, the President of the University of the Philippine System and the Chairpersons of the Committees on Health and 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.

SEC 10. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations and other issuances or parts thereof, inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 11. *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,