

Sixteenth Congress
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5153



Introduced by Honorable Douglas S. Hagedorn

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to convert the Ospital Ng Palawan in the City of Puerto Princesa, Province of Palawan into a 400-bed capacity tertiary hospital to be known as the Palawan Medical Center under the supervision and control of the Department of Health.

Section 11, Article XIII of the 1987 Constitution provides:

"The State shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall endeavor to make essential goods, health and other social services available to all the people at affordable cost. There shall be priority for the needs of the underprivileged sick, elderly, disabled, women, and children. The State shall endeavor to provide free medical care to paupers."

A 150-bed capacity tertiary level hospital, the Ospital Ng Palawan was established on February 24, 1998 by virtue of Republic Act No. 8549. The hospital was envisioned to provide health services to 11 mainland and 12 island municipalities, 1 city and 432 barangays. On January 1, 2004, it was transferred to the National Government. Due to budgetary constraints, however, upgrading of the hospital has not yet been implemented.

Stretching 650 kilometers from end to end of the mainland, and composed of more than 1,700 islands, the Province of Palawan is one area in the country where medical services and facilities are grossly inadequate. This situation is most apparent in the City of Puerto Princesa where there is a large concentration of people, many within the poverty level. Compounding the situation is the fact that the ill and the afflicted constituents in the other parts of the province are usually brought to Puerto Princesa City by their relatives, thinking that they can get better hospital care in its medical facilities.

The Ospital Ng Palawan is always overcrowded and lacks the necessary medical facilities and personnel, resulting in high morbidity and mortality rate in the province. However, the shortage in nursing and other manpower was resolved by hiring members of the staff on a job order basis. Fortunately, the hospital provides a good training ground for fresh graduates, hence, there are many applicants despite the low compensation.

Known as the "*Last Frontier*" and the "*Cleanest and Greenest City and Province*," Palawan is a paradise with a very bright future and promise, a land truly blessed. It has become a major tourism area. As such, there is a yearly increase in the number of tourists who go to Palawan to enjoy its natural attractions. Puerto Princesa serves as the gateway from where people travel to see the many attractions all over the province.

The influx of tourists creates a heavy demand for medical services that conform to acceptable international standards. Converting the Ospital Ng Palawan into a tertiary hospital with an increased bed capacity will deliver this demand for medical services. It will also greatly benefit the people of Palawan and will better address the health needs of the most marginalized sector of the community, making the hospital more pro-active and responsive to the thrust of the Department of Health for "*Kalusugan Pangkalahatan*."

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



DOUGLAS S. HAGEDORN

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AN ACT

CONVERTING THE OSPITAL NG PALAWAN IN THE CITY OF PUERTO PRINCESA, PROVINCE OF PALAWAN INTO A TERTIARY HOSPITAL TO BE KNOWN AS THE PALAWAN MEDICAL CENTER UNDER THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND TECHNICAL SUPERVISION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. The Ospital Ng Palawan in the City of Puerto Princesa, Province of Palawan is hereby converted into a tertiary hospital to be known as the Palawan Medical Center.

SEC. 2. The hospital shall have the capabilities of a tertiary hospital increasing its bed capacity to four hundred (400) beds. The Palawan Medical Center shall be under the direct administrative and technical supervision of the Department of Health.

SEC. 3. The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act of the year following its enactment into law and thereafter.

SEC. 4. Within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, the Secretary of Health shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 5. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a national newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,