

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 5499

Introduced by Representative **CATHERINE BARCELONA-REYES, M.D.**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to introduce an increase in the current salaries received by government physicians.

The presence of health workers, particularly physicians, in all corners of the country means that our government is prioritizing the welfare of the people. It is one thing to provide a universal healthcare system, but how can the people have access to healthcare in their areas if there is an absence of physicians. This is especially true in rural and far-flung areas, where there is a scarcity of government doctors that will provide free services to the people when they need it. In cases of emergency, the people will turn to an available doctor in town, who might be charging professional fees that patients in need of medical attention will just blindly pay due to the lack of available government physicians.

It is the policy of the State to free the people from poverty by providing them adequate and accessible social services (Sec. 9, Article II). Furthermore, the State also guarantees that the labor sector will be the primary mover of the economy, and such guarantee shall be present in the form of protection of the rights of the workers (Sec. 18, Article II).

Currently, the government doctors receive salaries equivalent to the Salary Grade 16 (PhP 26,878). Such amount is deemed not enough to cover for all expenses for the family of a doctor. Given their educational attainment, it is only proper that they be given a higher pay that reflects their services, their capabilities, and their education-level.

In a study of the Department of Health, there are 26,742 government health workers,

2838 of which are government doctors. They are unevenly distributed in the country, largely concentrated in Metro Manila and nearby areas. The Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, Cordillera Administrative Region, and Davao Region register the smallest numbers of doctors stationed in the region. Many health professionals do not work in these areas because of the perceived costs of living and working there. As a result, they may opt to start private practice in wealthier metropolitan areas, or work in private hospitals for higher professional fees. Worse, some doctors go back to school to study nursing with the aspirations of going abroad to earn more than thrice what they earn here in the Philippines.

By increasing the base salary grade of our government physicians, they will be more enthusiastic in providing quality medical services in rural and far-flung areas, much because they are financially secure and incomes will be equal to what they should rightfully get as members of the most educated professionals of the country.

With that, the immediate passage of this Bill, therefore, is earnestly sought.



HON. CATHERINE BARCELONA-REYES, M.D.

Representative

First District, Camarines Norte

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HOUSE BILL NO. 5499

Introduced by **Representative CATHERINE BARCELONA-REYES, M.D.**

AN ACT
INCREASING THE BASE SALARY GRADE OF GOVERNMENT PHYSICIANS
FROM SALARY GRADE 16 TO 25

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title*- This Act shall be known as the “Suweldo ni Dok Act of 2014.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of State Policies*- This Act is grounded on the following constitutional provisions:

Section 9 of the Article II of the Philippine Constitution states that “The State shall promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all.”;

Section 11 on the section of Health in Article XIII states that “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 under-privileged, sick, elderly, disabled, women, and children. The State shall endeavor to provide free medical care to paupers.”, and

Section 18 of Article II states that "The State affirms labor as a primary social economic force. It shall protect the rights of workers and promote their welfare."

In light of these constitutional provisions, it shall be a policy of the State to provide health workers, especially our government physicians, improvements in their socio-economic well-being by making necessary salary adjustments to enable a better living for better service to the Filipinos in need of medical attention.

SEC. 3. Coverage – For the purposes of this Act, government physicians/doctors are individuals carrying the title 'Doctor of Medicine' duly certified by the Professional Regulatory Commission (PRC) who are currently employed by the government or by public health institutions duly accredited by the government and are currently active in the practice of their professions.

SEC. 4. Salary Grade Adjustment – From Salary Grade 16, the base pay of government physicians shall be raised to Salary Grade 25 without prejudice to the current allowances they receive.

SEC. 5. Implementing Agencies – The Department of Health and the Department of Budget and Management shall jointly craft the implementing rules and regulations specifying the particulars related to this Act within ninety (90) days after its effectivity.

SEC. 6. Repealing Clause - All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations or other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed and modified accordingly.

SEC. 7. Separability Clause - If any clause, sentence, paragraph or part of this Act shall be adjudged by any Court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such judgment shall not affect, impair or invalidate the remainder of this Act, but shall be confined in its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph or part thereof directly involved.

SEC. 8. Effectivity - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following the completion of its publication either in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,