



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. **5608**

Introduced by Hon. Eufanio "Franny" C. Eriguel, M.D.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Health care is a workforce-driven industry and human resources are the most important component of health care provision. A qualified health workforce valuably contributes to the delivery of healthcare services. Therefore, Human Resources for Health (HRH) are considered as the life force and drivers of the health system.

While the Philippines is considered as a major source of local and foreign health professionals, DOH data show that standard health professional to population ratios are not being met in rural areas. Global reports point out that health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) cannot be achieved without adequate and appropriate health workforce.

Philippine problems on human resources for health (HRH) stem from: weaknesses in HRH production; limited capacity for rural employment where HRH need is greatest; ineffective retention schemes; and, uncoordinated interventions for capability development. On the other hand, opportunities for foreign employment have continually been attractive to Filipino human resources for health.

The imbalance in the HRH skill mix is mainly socio-economic in nature. Whilst more medical specialists cater to the international market and upper class societies, there are fewer primary health care practitioners available for majority of the country's population. There is high degree of migration to countries with lower burden of disease while most source countries, as the Philippines, face the risk of HRH shortage. All of these inconsistencies pose major constraints to the achievement of Health for ALL.

Addressing these issues require a coordinated approach among government agencies and relevant stakeholders. There is a need to integrate HRH planning to unify policies and standards on production and deployment of various health professions, strengthen health workforce regulatory functions, and manage HRH in a way that is responsive to the Philippine health system needs and design.

In 2006, the Department of Health (DOH) spearheaded the creation of the HRH Network which is composed of multi-sectoral government and non-government offices that have mandates relevant to HRH management and development. The HRH Network integrates agency efforts to harmonize HRH policy directions.

In the seven years of its existence (2006-2013), the network has efficiently undertaken policy development, adoption and implementation geared towards migration management, salary standardization, protection and welfare of workers, competency-based licensure, and reintegration from foreign employment. However, continued concerted efforts are needed to pursue the harmonization of policy directions and interventions.

The institutionalization of the Network is recommended to ensure its maintenance and continued functioning until it has substantially, if not completely, attained its objectives.



HON. EUFRANIO "Franny" C. ERIGUEL, M.D.



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AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING THE HUMAN RESOURCES FOR
HEALTH NETWORK PHILIPPINES

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

ARTICLE I

SECTION 1. *Short Title* - This Act shall be known as the "Human Resources for Health Network Philippines Act."

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy* - The Philippine Constitution of 1987 declares that the State shall undertake health manpower development that will be responsive to the health needs of the population.

Towards this end, the State shall institutionalize and maintain an inter-agency coordinating body for the development and management of human resources for health in the country that will:

- a) Ensure that the education and training of the Human Resources for Health (HRH) is linked to the health system needs;
- b) Ensure that HRH are well-motivated and effectively contribute to the health system;
- c) Ensure that the principles of ethical recruitment of international health personnel are practiced through managed migration;
- d) Engage in national and international partnerships and networks for the management and development of HRH; and
- e) Ensure that HRH planning, and policy monitoring and development are coordinated across different agencies.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms* – For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

1. Health Human Resource Development Bureau (HHRDB) – shall refer to the Bureau created by virtue of Executive Order 102 s. 1999 "Redirecting the Functions and Operations of the Department of Health". The Bureau is mandated to ensure the training and development of the health human resource at all levels of the health care system.
2. Human Resources for Health (HRH) – shall refer to health care professionals and health care workers. As defined by the World Health Organization, this term pertains to "people whose job it is to protect and improve the health of their communities".
3. HRH Development – shall refer to HRH activities covering education, training, and capacity building.
4. HRH Management – shall refer to a wide range of HRH activities encompassing planning, financing, production, monitoring, information systems management, and evaluation.
5. HRH Network Philippines – shall refer to a multi-sectoral body composed of different government and non-government offices or bureaus that aims to address and respond to HRH issues, problems and challenges in the country.
6. HRH Master Plan – shall refer to a long term plan that guides the health sector in proper planning, development, management and effective utilization of Philippine HRH.
7. Integrated database system for HRH – shall refer to an integrated system that captures, processes, stores and reports vital information on HRH production, utilization, deployment, migration, re-entry and retirement at the national level.

ARTICLE II

The HRH Network Philippines

SEC. 4. *Institutionalization of the HRH Network Philippines* - The HRH Network Philippines, hereinafter referred to as the Network, initiated through a Memorandum of Understanding in October 25, 2006 among multi-sectoral agencies (accredited professional organizations, academic institutions, government and non-government offices) that have mandates on HRH production, retention, migration, and reintegration, is hereby institutionalized, and shall be recognized as the central coordinating body responsible for providing technical advisory on HRH development and management in the Philippines. This inter-agency

advisory and coordinating body shall be supervised directly by the office of the Director of the DOH - HHRDB.

SEC. 5. *Objectives of the HRH Network Philippines* - The Network aims to harmonize the policies and coordinate the action of different agencies, accredited professional organizations, academic institutions, and non-government organizations in the production, welfare, and development of HRH to deliver quality health care to the Filipinos by:

- a) Facilitating the implementation and operationalization of the HRH Master Plan (HRHMP)
- b) Providing policy directions that would address and respond to current and emerging issues and challenges of HRH
- c) Contributing data and information to develop and maintain the Integrated Database for HRH
- d) Coordinating HRH planning, and policy monitoring and development across different agencies.
- e) Advocating for HRH development and management policies and programs across the various sectors

SEC. 6. *Composition and Membership of the Network* - The Network shall be composed of three (3) Technical Working Committees (TWCs), and the HHRDB Director and staff who shall serve, on a concurrent basis, as the Network's Executive Director and Secretariat respectively.

Membership to the Network shall consist of representatives from the following government agencies, non-government organizations, academic institutions, and professional organizations:

- 1) Department of Health (DOH);
- 2) Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA);
- 3) Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG);
- 4) Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE);
- 5) Department of Budget and Management (DBM);
- 6) Department of Finance (DOF);
- 7) National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA);
- 8) Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA);
- 9) Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA);
- 10) Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO);
- 11) Commissioner of the Bureau of Immigration (BI);
- 12) Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA);
- 13) Commission on Higher Education (CHED);
- 14) Professional Regulation Commission (PRC);
- 15) Civil Service Commission (CSC);
- 16) University of the Philippines, Manila or his representative;
- 17) Two (2) representatives from health professional organizations;
- 18) Two (2) representatives from health professional academic associations;

- 19) One (1) representative from trade union or civil society organization involved in HRH issues.

SEC. 7. Composition and Functions of the Network's Technical Working Committees – The Network's Technical Working Committees (TWC) shall be aligned with the following themes: HRH Entry, HRH Workforce, and HRH Exit and Re-entry.

The Network's Technical Working Committees shall be composed of a permanent and an alternate representative with a rank not lower than a division chief from each member agency.

Each TWC shall prioritize and address matters concerning the planning, education and recruitment of HRH (TWC on Entry); the supervision, compensation, systems support and lifelong learning of HRH (TWC on Workforce); and career choice, migration, retirement, and reintegration of HRH into the Philippine healthcare system (TWC on Exit and Re-entry). The TWCs shall draft policy recommendations and/or develop programs in response to the identified or prioritized HRH issues.

SEC. 8. The HRH Network Executive Director – The Executive Director shall be responsible for overseeing the coordination and the implementation of programs and projects and shall, in pursuit thereof, exercise oversight functions over the Network.

Specifically, the Network Executive Director shall:

- a) Act as the lead convener of the HRH Network Philippines;
- b) Translate policy directions from the HRH Network Philippines into operational strategies;
- c) Oversee the implementation of the HRH Master Plan;
- d) Create and/or remove committees as the need arises;

SEC. 9. The Network Secretariat – The Secretariat, as appointed by the HHRDB Director, shall act as the convening body of the Network and shall perform functions such as, but not limited to the following: facilitation of multi-sectoral meetings, consolidation of reports and policy agenda of Network, management of important database and logistics, management of HRH researches, and coordination of capacity-building activities of TWC members.

SEC. 10. Development and Maintenance of an Integrated Database of HRH – The Network shall develop and maintain an integrated database containing relevant HRH information to be used for evidence-based planning and policy making. As such, all concerned government agencies are mandated to provide the Network the necessary information from their databases and to update such data on a regular basis.

SEC. 11. National HRH Network Policy Forum – The National HRH Policy Forum shall be conducted annually to serve as a venue for the presentation of policy directions, initiatives, and accomplishments for

HRH. It also serves as an advocacy mechanism to promote HRH development in the country.

SEC. 12. *HRH Network Philippines Capability Building Activities* - The Network shall conduct trainings, seminars and workshops such as, but not limited to policy development and HRH management.

ARTICLE III

Final Provisions

SEC. 14. *Monitoring, Evaluation, and Accountabilities* - Regular monitoring and evaluation shall be done by the Executive Director, through the Secretariat, to determine the accountabilities of the HRH Network Philippines to contributing agencies. The specifics/details of monitoring, evaluation, accountabilities and annual reporting shall be provided for in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of this Act.

SEC. 15. *Implementing Rules and Regulations* - The Department of Health shall spearhead the drafting and finalization of the implementing rules and regulations of this Act within a year after the effectivity hereof.

SEC. 16. *Separability Clause* - If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SEC. 17. *Repealing Clause* - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SEC. 18. *Effectivity Clause* - This Act shall take effect 15 days after its publication in at least two national newspapers of general circulation.