

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City



SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

House Bill No. 6391

Introduced by REPRESENTATIVE ARTHUR YAP

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Constitution provides 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*'. However, there is a wide gap between rural and urban health delivery services to our people.

Doctors are drawn more to the cities than to the rural communities. This causes a mal-distribution of physicians in the country. This is due to lack of incentives for doctors serving rural communities. Offers from abroad have become so attractive that rural areas in the Philippines now face a potential shortage of medical services. There is an urgent need to increase expert health-care services in the countryside.

Rural doctors are in the frontline in the delivery of basic health services to our people especially those in the remote areas. While their credentials are at par with those of their counterparts in the private practice, rural practitioners under the government's employ receive lower salaries. In some fourth and fifth class municipalities in the country, doctors earn as low as P25,000 a month. Hence, a doctor's average stay in one municipality is merely two to three years. Thereafter, he or she leaves his post to seek for greener pastures.

To prevent the exodus of our doctors from their rural practice and encourage them to serve our people in most need of their services, additional incentives must be given them.

In consideration of rural doctors' contribution to the health and wellbeing of our people, this bill seeks to provide our rural doctors, in addition to the incentives and benefits granted them under existing laws, the following:

- Hazard allowance in an amount to be determined by the local health board of the local government unit concerned; and,
- Scholarships in the form of tuition fees and stipends.

Under Section 21 of Republic Act No. 7305, otherwise known as the 'Magna Carta for Public Health Workers', only those public health workers assigned in difficult areas, strife-torn or embattled areas, distresses or isolated stations, prisons camps, mental hospitals, radiation-exposed clinics, laboratories or disease-infested areas or in areas declared under state of calamity or emergency, are given hazard allowance. This proposed measure aims to level the field.

By providing these incentives to our rural doctors, we shall have conferred to them the respect due to them for their dedicated service in delivering vital health services to our people.

For the foregoing reasons, the immediate passage of the bill is earnestly urged.



ARTHUR C. YAP
Representative

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AN ACT
GRANTING INCENTIVES AND OTHER BENEFITS TO
RURAL HEALTH UNIT DOCTORS AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

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

1 **SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** - This Act shall be known as the ‘Rural
2 Health Unit Doctors Incentives and Other benefits Act’.

3 **SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** - The State shall protect and
4 promote the right to health of people and instill health consciousness among
5 them by giving each individual unimpaired access to health and information
6 services. Towards this end, this Act shall provide incentives and benefits to
7 rural health unit doctors who are the front-liners in the promotion, protection
8 and maintenance of the people’s health in the rural areas.

9 **SECTION 3. *Definition of Rural Health Doctor.*** - The term ‘rural
10 health doctor’ refers to a licensed doctor of medicine employed by the local

1 government and who is assigned to actively and regularly perform his/her
2 official duties in a rural area or remote community.

3 **SECTION 4. *Incentives and Benefits.*** - In recognition of their
4 services, rural health doctors shall in addition to the incentives and benefits
5 granted them under existing laws, be entitled to the following:

- 6 a) Hazard allowance in an amount to be determined by the local health
7 board of the local government unit concerned; and,
8 b) Scholarships in the form of tuition fees and stipends.

9 **SECTION 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** - Within sixty
10 (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, The Department of Health, (DOH),
11 the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the
12 Department of Budget (DBM, in consultation with the various leagues of
13 local government units concerned, shall formulate and promulgate the rules
14 and regulations necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

15 **SECTION 6. *Separability Clause*** - If any portion or provision of
16 this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions hereof
17 not affected thereby shall remain valid and effective.

18 **SECTION 7. *Repealing Clause.***—All laws, presidential decrees,
19 executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with the
20 provisions of this Act, are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

21 **SECTION 8. *Effectivity Clause.*** - The Act shall take effect fifteen
22 (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least
23 two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.