

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9194



Introduced by Honorable Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Angelina "Helen" DL. Tan, M.D.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, there were 2.3 million Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in 2017 – 20.7 percent came from the CALABARZON region, 12.9 percent from Central Luzon, and 9.5 percent from Western Visayas. Most OFWs worked in Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Kuwait. Most OFWs were in elementary occupations, or were service and sales workers, or were plant and machine operators and assemblers. In 2017, the OFWs contributed over 205 billion pesos in remittances.

Despite improvements in occupational health and safety worldwide, OFWs suffer from a growing list of physical and mental health problems due to risks associated with the nature of their employments. The Department of Health (DOH) in 2017 provided assistance to 101 medically repatriated overseas Filipinos; neurologic, cardiovascular and cancer problems were the top cases for medical repatriation. Claims from the OFWs and their dependents from the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) amounted to 1.7 million pesos, including those who were confined in hospitals abroad. Renal failure, community-acquired pneumonia, normal spontaneous delivery, acute gastroenteritis, and urinary tract infection are the leading cases by PhilHealth claims.

The country's policy environment provides significant protections to the health of OFWs. Republic Act (R.A.) No. 10022, which amended R.A. 8042, or "Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995," improved the standards of protection and promotion of welfare of the OFWs and their families. A Joint Memorandum Circular was issued for the Integrated Medical Repatriation Assistance Program, while the DOH established its "National Policy on the Health of Migrants and Overseas Filipinos," and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) established its MEDPlus program as supplemental medical assistance for OWWA members. The country needs to do more, especially in paving better access, and in providing higher quality of healthcare. The establishment of a national hospital facility with departmentalized clinical services and select specialty care for OFWs and their families is being proposed to fill in these gaps.

In view of the foregoing, and in order to make the country's commitment to Universal Health Care more genuinely felt by the OFW community, approval of this bill is being sought.


HON. GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
2nd District, Pampanga


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

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9194

Introduced by Honorable Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Angelina "Helen" DL. Tan, M.D.

**AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS HOSPITAL AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. This Act shall be known as the Overseas Filipino Workers Hospital (OFW) Act or OFW Hospital Act.

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. It is policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of the Filipino people and to instill health consciousness among them. The State shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development. Further, the state shall protect the interest and promote the well-being of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) as recognition of their importance and contribution on economic development and nation building.

SEC. 3. Establishment of the OFW Hospital. There shall be established a hospital with at least tertiary level of care to be known as OFW Hospital, hereinafter referred to as the Hospital. The Hospital shall be developed consistent with the health care needs of the OFW and their dependents. The Hospital shall be under full administrative and technical supervision of the Department of Health (DOH).

SEC. 4. Objectives. To ensure the availability, accessibility and affordability of quality health care, the hospital shall have the following main objectives:

- a. Provide comprehensive health care services to all migrant workers who are Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) contributors and their legal dependents;
- b. Conduct medical examinations to ensure the physical and mental capability of would-be overseas contract workers duly covered by an approved job order;
- c. Serve as primary referral hospital for repatriated OFW needing medical assistance and support;
- d. Set up systems that will effectively monitor condition of patients and to generate relevant health information and data for policy formulation; and
- e. Participate in the health care provider networks and arrangements relative to the implementation of Republic Act No. 11223, or the Universal Health Care Act.

SEC. 5. *Medical Assistance.* The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) – Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) shall strengthen its existing health benefits and medical assistance programs to provide subsidies to the Hospital for qualified OFW and legal dependent patients.

SEC. 6. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* The DOH shall promulgate implementing rules and regulations (IRR) to carry out the provisions of this Act upon consultation with OWWA and other stakeholders, and shall be implemented consistent with the Hospital's development plan.

SEC. 7. *Appropriations.* The Secretary of Health shall include in the Department's program the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act. The OWWA shall also include in their benefits and medical assistance programs for OFW the line item budget necessary to improve the access of OFW and dependents to healthcare services.

SEC. 8. *Exemption from Donor's Taxes, Customs and Tariff Duties.* All donations, contributions or endowments which may be made by persons or entities to the Hospital, and the importation of medical equipment and machineries, spare parts and other medical equipment not hereto mentioned used solely and exclusively for the Hospital shall be exempt from income, gift, direct and indirect taxes, wharfage fees and other charges and restrictions.

SEC. 9. *Separability Clause.* If any provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other provisions hereof.

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

SEC. 11. *Effectivity Clause.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette*, or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,