

Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City, Metro Manila

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS  
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 9530



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Introduced by Representative Gabriel H. Bordado, Jr.

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#### EXPLANATORY NOTE

National reference laboratories are vital in providing reliable microbiological analysis of clinical specimens and are important in supporting and guiding clinical laboratories around the country in adopting national standards and protocols for microbiological analysis. Sub-national Reference Laboratories, in turn, aid in those functions by supporting and decentralizing tasks for the national reference laboratories in order to expedite results without compromising the quality of service.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has forced the whole world into lockdowns and which has greatly limited movement within our country, highlights the importance of establishing more sub-national reference laboratories in the country. The current challenges we are facing emphasizes the need to provide coordinated, unified, and timely analysis as well as response, and surveillance of clinical specimens and other potentially infectious agents so as to be able to protect the public's health and safety.

With the improvement of medical facilities of the Bicol Medical Center in Naga City, my office is more than ready to provide additional support to the national reference laboratories and other sub-national reference laboratories by way of extending quality laboratory services to a wider population. This bill seeks to establish a Bicol-South Luzon Sub-National Reference Laboratory geared towards expanding and improving the laboratory services being catered to Bicol and other nearby regions.

  
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AN ACT  
PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A BICOL-SOUTH LUZON  
SUB-NATIONAL REFERENCE LABORATORY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS  
THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. There shall be provided the establishment of a Bicol-South Luzon Sub-National Reference Laboratory (BSL-SNRL).

SEC.2. This Act shall have the following objectives:

- a. Its general objective is to establish the BSL-SNRL with the aim of expanding the laboratory services being catered in Bicol to nearby regions thus making its services more accessible to a larger population in line with the Universal Health Care implementation.
- b. The specific objective is to institutionalize and harmonize enabling mechanisms in the operations of the BSL-SNRL thereby providing improved services, and;
- c. To strengthen the capacity and capability of the BSL-SNRL through networking, partnership and collaboration with other regions.

SEC. 3. Composition and Function. The BSL-SNRL shall be comprised of two (2) sections— the Regional Diagnostic and Reference Laboratory (RDRL) and the Regional Blood Center (RBC).

The RDRL shall be in-charge of the following units:

1. The Enteric Laboratory.
  - a. It shall provide confirmatory testing at the regional level of food and water-borne diseases to minimize lag time and shipment of samples to Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM);
  - b. Examines samples submitted by the Regional Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit (RESU) during clustering of cases and/or outbreaks; and
  - c. Provide diagnostic services to food handlers.

2. Water Laboratory.

- a. Provide water bacteriological analyses from health facilities, food establishments and water refilling stations; and
- b. Examines samples submitted by RESU during clustering of cases/or outbreaks.

3. Water Physico-Chemical Analysis Laboratory.

Provide physical and chemical analyses of water from residents, health facilities, food establishments and water refilling stations.

4. COVID-19 Sub-National Laboratory.

- a. Provide confirmatory testing at the regional level to minimize lag time and shipment of samples to RITM; and
- b. Provide diagnostic services to the population.

5. Dengue Sub-National Laboratory.

- a. Provide confirmatory testing at the regional level to minimize lag time and shipment of samples to RITM;
- b. Enable rapid testing of samples from outbreaks; and
- c. Provide diagnostic services to the population.

6. Entomology Laboratory.

- a. Study the vector biology and distribution of vectors of medical importance in Bicol;
- b. Monitor insecticide resistance and evaluate efficacy of currently employed vector control measure against the transmission of vector-borne diseases;
- c. Facilitate scientific researches in the field of public health entomology in collaboration with the Department of Medical Entomology, RITM;
- d. Provide solutions, enhance responses and monitor entries of new and existing mosquito-borne pathogens towards a strengthened, vigilant and efficient prevention, control and elimination of mosquito-borne diseases.

7. TB Reference Laboratory.

- a. Technical arm of TB and HIV-AIDS Programs for trainings and laboratory diagnosis;
- b. Performs the following services referred by the health facilities:
  - i. GeneXpert for HIV Viral Load and Rifampicin Resistance;
  - ii. Direct Sputum Smear Microscopy (DSSM);
  - iii. Solid TB Culture.

The regional RBC shall ensure adequate supply of blood through voluntary blood donations, maintain the highest standard testing and processing of blood, institutionalize equitable system of distribution of blood and blood components to blood service facilities and strengthen efficient referral system among blood service facilities within the region and will be composed of the wing units:

1. Blood Management Unit which will be in-charge of blood donor recruitment and advocacy, blood donation and donor care and retention;
2. Blood Screening Unit (Serology);
3. Nucleic Acid Amplification Test (NAAT) Unit (Confirmatory Test)\*
4. Blood Component Processing Unit;
5. Blood Storage and Issuance Unit

There shall be a Biosafety and Biosecurity\* and Quality Assurance Units\* which shall ensure quality laboratory standards/processes and biosafety/biosecurity protocols are implemented.

SEC. 4. Appropriation. The Department of Health shall include in its program the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the Annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 5. Implementing Rules and Regulations. The Department of Health shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 6. Separability Clause. If any part, section or provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 7. Repealing Clause. All other laws, decrees, orders, issuances, and rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed and modified accordingly.

SEC. 8. Effectivity. This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days from complete publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,