

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

House Bill No. 10316



Introduced by **Rep. ANGELO MARCOS BARBA**
2nd District, Ilocos Norte

AN ACT ESTABLISHING SPECIALTY HEALTH CARE UNITS (SHCUs) ATTACHED TO REGIONAL HOSPITALS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Universal Health Care (UHC) Law was enacted to provide equitable access to quality and affordable health care services, and protected against financial risk. While much of the discussions on the UHC Law focused on the latter, particularly on financial hardships, equitable access to health care services, particularly for specialized treatment, is of primary importance.

There are several specialty hospitals in the Philippines which provide services for a particular disease or illness with the highest medical care rendered by medical experts using highly specialized equipment, but all of them are in Metro Manila. Consequently, patients are expected to come to Quezon City for their treatment, which adds another economic burden to them and to their families.

Recognizing this, the Philippine Heart Center (PHC) pursued the *Kalusugan Pangkalahatan* Program of the Department of Health and explored the regionalization of health care. Instead of the patients coming to Manila, it is the PHC who will go to where the patients are. This laudable move eventually increased access to cardiovascular care in the country, but there is more to be done.

Bear in mind that universal health coverage means that all people have access to the health services they need, when and where they need them, without financial hardship.¹ It includes the full range of essential health services, from health promotion to prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and palliative care.²

Hence, this bill.

¹ Universal Health Coverage. WHO. Retrieved on August 23, 2021 from https://www.who.int/health-topics/universal-health-coverage#tab=tab_1

² *Ibid.*

This proposed measure seeks to establish specialty health care units (SHCUs) in all regions of the Philippines. The SHCUs will be attached to regional hospitals. The creation of SHCUs shall address the medical needs of patients with diseases of a particular organ or group of organs, the health care needs by a particular group, such as children, women, or the elderly. Correspondingly, existing regional hospitals will be upgraded in infrastructure and manpower resources.

The SHCUs will therefore carry the brand of the country's specialty hospitals to inspire confidence among the regional patients on the quality of specialized care provided in regional facilities. It shall increase the availability and accessibility of specialty centers nationwide and ensure equitable health care for all.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


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

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “Specialty Health Care Units Act”.

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is a declared policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.

To this end, the State shall provide access to specialized health services to the general public by extending and establishing specialty health care centers or units in all regions of the Philippines.

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

- a. Special health care unit or SHCU – a unit within a DOH-regional hospital that provide services to treat medical conditions that require a particular subset of skills and technology; and
- b. DOH Specialty Hospitals – refer to the Philippine Heart Center, the Lung Center of the Philippines, the National Kidney and Transplant Institute, the Philippine Children’s Medical Center, and the Philippine Orthopedic Center;

SECTION 4. Specialty Health Care Units (SHCUs). – The Department of Health (DOH), in coordination with the Philippine Heart Center, the Lung Center of the Philippines, the National Kidney and Transplant Institute, the Philippine Children’s Medical Center, and the Philippine Orthopedic Center, shall establish Specialty Health Care Units (SHCUs) within DOH Regional Hospitals.

The creation of SHCUs shall address the medical needs of patients with diseases of a particular organ or group of organs, the health care needs by a particular group, such as children, women, or the elderly; shall increase the availability and accessibility of specialty centers nationwide; and, shall ensure equitable health care for all.

SECTION 5. *General Guidelines on the Establishment of SHCUs.* –

- i. Accessibility – The DOH, through its regional hospitals, and in consultation with the Heads of DOH Specialty Hospitals, shall develop standards for the creation of SHCUs to increase the accessibility of specialty health care services to patients.
- ii. Staffing Summary – The Civil Service Commission (CSC) and its respective regional offices, in coordination with DOH Regional Hospitals, shall formulate a standardized staffing pattern for the SHCUs, which shall be submitted to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).
- iii. Availment of Specialty Health Care Services – The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PHIC) shall develop an appropriate case rate package for specialty health care units to achieve the financial stability of SHCUs.
- iv. Regulatory and Licensing Requirements – The Health Facilities and Services Regulatory Bureau (HFSRB) shall develop the requirements necessary for the operation of SHCUs.
- v. Other applicable guidelines – The DOH shall convene with concerned stakeholders in determining such other guidelines applicable in order to implement the intent of this Act.

SECTION 6. *Special Health Care Units Development Plan (SHCUDP).* – The DOH shall formulate a ten (10) year Special Health Care Units Development Plan that will identify the establishment of SHCUs attached to DOH Regional Hospitals.

- i. Infrastructure – The DOH, in consultation with DOH Specialty Hospitals, shall include in the SHCUDP the necessary infrastructure, basic facilities and equipment needed for the establishment of SHCUs; and
- ii. Personnel – The DOH, in coordination with the CSC, shall include in the SHCUDP the human resources needed to run and manage the SHCUs.

SECTION 7. *Appropriations.* – The Secretary of Health shall include in the Department's program the establishment and operationalization of SHCUs, the funding of which shall be included in the budget of DOH under the General Appropriations Act (GAA).



SECTION 8. *Implementation.* – The DOH, in consultation and coordination with the Chiefs of Hospital of the regional hospitals, the CSC, and other concerned agencies, shall formulate, identify, and promulgate the implementing guidelines, rules and regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 9. *Repealing Clause.* – Any provision of law, decree, order, rule or regulation inconsistent with this Act is hereby repealed and/or modified accordingly.

SECTION 10. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,