

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

House Bill No. 10331



INTRODUCED BY
REP. ALFRED VARGAS

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR ALLOWANCES AND BENEFITS FOR HEALTH CARE
WORKERS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Amidst the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, health care workers have been at the vanguard of protecting the health and welfare of the general public as they risk their lives to serve and provide care especially for COVID-19 infected patients. Health care workers are the heart and soul of the public health system amidst risks of COVID-19 infection and the social and economic challenges posed by the pandemic.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continue to persist, health care workers have faced numerous challenges on their working conditions and accessing benefits duly provided by the government to recognize their heroism and dedication.

In our efforts to recognize and justly compensate the heroism and service of our health care workers, the government has enacted Republic Act No. 11469 or the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act, and Republic Act No. 11494 or the Bayanihan to Recover as One Act which provide the legal basis for COVID-19 active hazard duty pay (AHDP) and special risk allowance (SRA) for health care workers. However, some groups of health care workers in various hospitals have reported failing to receive or have faced delays in receiving the aforementioned benefits.

To augment and strengthen these efforts and to properly recognize and compensate our heroes, it is imperative to increase the benefits and allowances that our health care workers receive during this public health crisis.

This bill seeks to provide increased allowances and benefits to health care workers during the state of public health emergency amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Included are fixed monthly special risk allowances; active hazard duty pays; PhilHealth coverage on all work-related medical expenses; life insurance, accommodation, transportation and meals or their cash equivalent; and just compensation worth One Million Pesos (Php1,000,000.00) in case of death, One Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php100,000.00) in case of severe COVID-19 sickness, and Fifteen Thousand Pesos (Php15,000.00) in case of mild or moderate COVID-19 case.

It is the hope of this measure to provide better working conditions and benefits for health care workers in the country that would cater to their needs and welfare which would in turn inspire and encourage them to serve in the country in the long run.

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



ALFRED VARGAS

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the "Allowances and Benefits for Health Care Workers Act."

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to ensure that the general welfare of Filipino healthcare workers is promoted through adequate compensation and benefits commensurate to their educational attainment and the services they provide, which are critical to the promotion of health, disease prevention, and health care services delivery.

SECTION 3. Coverage. - The provisions and benefits provided under this Act shall be given to all healthcare workers who are engaged in health and health related work in health facilities during the state of public health emergency due to the COVID- 19 pandemic as declared by the President of the Philippines. Healthcare workers shall include medical, allied health professional, administrative and support personnel, employed regardless of their employment status.

SECTION 4. Allowances and Benefits. The following shall be provided to all healthcare workers covered under Section 3 of this Act:

- (a) A fixed monthly COVID-19 special risk allowance for every month that they are serving during the state of national emergency as declared by the President: Provided, That the COVID-19 special risk allowance of public health workers shall be in addition to the hazard pay granted under Republic Act No. 7305 or the "Magna Carta of Public Health Workers";
- (b) Active Hazard Duty Pay exclusively for public health workers for every month that they are serving during the state of national emergency as declared by the President: Provided, That the Active Hazard Duty shall be in addition to the hazard pay granted under Republic Act No. 7305 or the "Magna Carta of Public Health Workers";
- (c) Assumption of all medical expenses by the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation in case of exposure to COVID-19 or any work-related injury or disease;
- (d) Provision of compensation to public and private healthcare workers who have contracted COVID-19 in the line of duty, with the following amounts, upon submission of required documents to support claims:
 - 1) In case of death of the health worker, One Million Pesos (Php1,000,000.00) shall be provided to the heirs of the health worker;
 - 2) In case of sickness, for a severe or critical case, One Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php100,000.00) shall be provided to the health worker; and
 - 3) In case of sickness, for a mild or moderate case, Fifteen Thousand Pesos (Php15,000.00) shall be provided to the health worker;
- (e) Provision of life insurance, accommodation, transportation, and meals, or their cash equivalent.

The provision of the foregoing benefits shall have retroactive application from July 1, 2021, and shall be exempt from income tax.

SECTION 5. Appropriation. – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year available appropriations of the Department of Health and/or the current year's Miscellaneous Personnel Benefit Fund, and any sources available as may be identified by DBM. Thereafter, the amount necessary for its continuous implementation shall be included in the Annual General Appropriations.

SECTION 6. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within thirty days (30) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Health and the Department of Budget and Management, in consultation with other government agencies and concerned stakeholders, shall issue the rules and regulations necessary to effectively implement the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 7. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 8. *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.

SECTION 9. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,