

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 2479



INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE PAUL R. DAZA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The COVID-19 pandemic as well as the potential of future pandemics necessitate a long-term approach to public health planning and health care. At the heart of an accessible, effective, and compassionate health is the quality and availability of human resources especially, doctors and nurses.

However, the number of doctors in the country is woefully insufficient to meet the healthcare needs of the general public. According to WHO estimates, the Philippines has six doctors per 100,000 people (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2021).¹ A review of the data from the Philippine Regulation Commission (PRC) shows that the number of newly licensed doctors has steadily declined in recent years, starting from 4,006 in 2019, to 3,538 in 2020, 1,677 in 2021, and then to 1,427 in 2022.

The complexity of the problem is not only rooted to declining number of enrollees but also to the reality of brain drain. Naturally, there is an economic reason for doctors and nurses to prefer to work abroad rather than serve in the Philippines. This is quite complex because most economies in the world could only do so much in terms of accommodating higher professional fees not just to their medical personnel but also to the rest of their workers in general. It is also not as simple as mandating increase in salaries. However, certainly, a lot of systemic improvements can be undertaken in stronger economies—and this is likely possible in the Philippines in the years to come.

In the meantime, basic systemic changes can already be initiated as the Philippines continues to grow its economy. One of such changes is allowing better access to quality education including medical education. Current data, as shared earlier, reveal that access to medical education in the Philippines remains limited to a select few due to the associated costs of medical education. This is further compounded by inaccessibility of medical schools, which are, more often than not, situated in major urban population centers far away from the provinces.

It is then critical that the Philippines begin establishing medical schools in regions where access is still weak—of course, taking into consideration the projections for health care needs of the population both locally and nationally. We do not wish to build “diploma mills” but rather take a long term and comprehensive look at the health, educational, and employment needs of the country. We do not wish to train doctors and nurses only to see them leaving the country right after graduation. We wish for them to stay and serve their *kababayans*, and some of the most important things to consider are decent pay and compensation, clear and fulfilling career pathways, opportunities for further education and training, and strong and fair management culture in hospitals.

Northern Samar is among those provinces where a medical school is direly needed. The University of Eastern Philippines (UEP) was established in 1918 and stands today as the premiere state university in Northern Samar, which offers the largest selection of undergraduate and graduate degree

¹ Baclig, C (2021, 9 June). *PH health workers: A pandemic of big work, small pay*. Available at <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1443920/ph-health-workers-a-pandemic-of-big-work-small-pay>

programs among the higher education institutions in Region VIII. As such, the UEP offers a solid foundation from which the first College of Medicine in Northern Samar may arise.

Therefore, in order to contribute to the long-term development of health care in the Philippines through the training of medical professionals, this bill proposes the establishment of a College of Medicine in UEP. This will not only give students—especially those who are qualified but are financially challenged—from Northern Samar and adjacent provinces access to high-quality medical school, it is also a step toward the future where all Filipinos, rich and poor, will be able to consult a doctor anytime, anywhere.

Thus, the early passage of this bill is earnestly requested.



PAUL RUIZ DAZA

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**“AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A COLLEGE OF MEDICINE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN
PHILIPPINES IN CATARMAN, PROVINCE OF NORTHERN SAMAR, TO BE KNOWN AS
THE “UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN PHILIPPINES COLLEGE OF MEDICINE”, AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”**

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

1 **SECTION 1. *Establishment.*** – There is hereby established a medical school in the University
2 of Eastern Philippines (UEP) located in Catarman, Province of Northern Samar, to be known as the
3 “UEP College of Medicine”.
4

5 **SEC. 2. *General Mandate.*** - The UEP College of Medicine, hereinafter referred to as the
6 “College”, shall primarily offer a Doctor of Medicine Program, including the Integrated Liberal Arts
7 and Medicine (INTRAMED) Program, consisting of basic science and clinical courses, and using
8 learner-centered and competency-based approach. The primary goal of the College shall be to develop
9 a corps of professional physicians to strengthen the healthcare system of the country, as well as to
10 respond to the human resource development needs of the Province of Northern Samar and Region VIII.
11

12 The College is also mandated to undertake research and extension services and provide
13 progressive leadership in these areas.
14

15 **SEC. 3. *Governance.*** - Being an institution within the UEP System, the governance of the
16 College shall be vested in the Board of Regents of the UEP, hereinafter referred to as the Board, whose
17 powers are defined under Republic Act No. 4126 entitled “An Act Converting The Samar Institute of
18 Technology In The Municipality of Catarman, Province of Samar, Into a University to be known as the
19 University of Eastern Philippines, and Authorizing the Appropriation of Funds Therefor”, and other
20 applicable laws and regulations, unless otherwise provided or amended elsewhere in this Act.

21 **SEC. 4. *The College Dean.*** – The College shall be headed by a Dean who shall be appointed by
22 the Board, subject to its guidelines on qualifications and standards, following a process of consultation
23 with the constituents of the College. The Dean shall render full-time services, serve a term of three (3)
24 years, and may be reappointed to another term.
25

26 Within six (6) months of the effectivity of this Act, the President of UEP shall constitute the
27 Search Committee for the Deanship.
28

29 The powers and duties of the Dean of the College, in addition to those specifically provided for
30 in this Act, shall include those usually pertaining to the Office of the Dean of similar state colleges and
31 those delegated by the Chancellor.
32

1 The salary of the Dean of the College shall be in accordance with Republic Act No. 11466 or
2 the "Salary Standardization Law of 2019", and such other laws amendatory thereto, which may
3 hereinafter be enacted, and shall be comparable to that being received by the Deans of similar
4 educational institutions.

5
6 In case of a vacancy in the Office of the Dean by reason of death, compulsory retirement,
7 resignation, removal for cause, or incapacity of the Dean to perform the functions of the office, the
8 Board upon the recommendation of the Chancellor, shall designate an Officer-in-Charge of the College,
9 pending the appointment of a new Dean: *Provided*, That the Officer-in-Charge shall serve only during
10 the unexpired portion of the term.

11
12 The Dean of the College shall be assisted by a College Secretary, who shall be appointed by the
13 Chancellor.

14
15 **SEC. 5. *The Faculty.*** – The Board shall appoint, upon the nomination by the President of the
16 University, the faculty members of the College: *Provided*, That no political belief, gender preference,
17 cultural or community affiliation or ethnic origin, nor religious opinion or affiliation shall be a matter of
18 inquiry in the appointment of faculty members of the College: *Provided, further*, That said appointment
19 shall be subject to the guidelines, qualifications, and standards set by the Board: *Provided, finally*, That
20 no member of the faculty shall teach for or against any church or religious sect.

21
22 **SEC. 6. *Scholarship Programs and Admission.*** – The College shall provide scholarships and
23 other affirmative action programs to assist poor but deserving students who qualify for admission to the
24 College.

25
26 No student shall be denied admission to the College by reason of gender, religion, cultural or
27 community affiliation, physical disability, or ethnic origin.

28
29 **SEC. 7. *Academic Freedom and Institutional Autonomy.*** – The College shall enjoy academic
30 freedom and institutional autonomy, pursuant to paragraph, Section 5 of Article XIV of the Constitution.

31
32 **SEC. 8. *Authority to Loan or Transfer Apparatus, Equipment or Supplies and Detail of***
33 ***Personnel.*** – Upon request of the Board, through the President of UEP, the heads of the bureaus and
34 offices of the national government may be needed by it, and detail employees for duty therein when, in
35 the judgment of the head of bureau or office, the apparatus, equipment, supplies or services of such
36 employees can be spared without serious detriment to public service.

37
38 The employees so detailed shall perform such duties as required of them by the Dean of the
39 College, and the time served shall be counted as part of their regular service.

40
41 **SEC. 9. *Duty and Tax Exemptions.*** – The importation by the College of medical books or
42 publications, medical equipment or instruments which are for medical, laboratory or scientific purpose
43 shall, upon certification by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), be exempt from customs
44 duties in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act No. 10863, otherwise known as the "Customs
45 Modernization and Tariff Act (CMTA)";

46
47 All grants, bequests, endowments, donations, and contributions made to and used actually,
48 directly and exclusively for educational purposes by the College, shall be exempt from donor's tax and
49 the same shall be considered as allowable deduction from gross income for the purposes of computing
50 the taxable income of the donor in accordance with the provisions of the National Internal Revenue
51 Code of 1997, as amended.

52
53 **SEC. 10. *Suppletory Application.*** – The provisions of Republic Act No. 8292, otherwise known
54 as the "Higher Education Modernization Act of 1997", shall form part of this Act.
55

1 **SEC. 11. *Parity Clause.*** - All other powers, functions, and privileges, responsibilities, and
2 limitations under existing laws shall be deemed granted to or imposed upon the College and its officials,
3 whenever appropriate.
4

5 **SEC. 12. *Appropriations.*** - The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall
6 be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.
7

8 **SEC. 13. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** - Within sixty (60) days from the approval of
9 this Act, the board shall, in consultation with the CHED, issue the rules and regulations to fully
10 implement the provisions of this Act.
11

12 **SEC. 14. *Separability Clause.*** - If, for any reason, any part or provision of this Act is declared
13 invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected are in full force and effect.
14

15 **SEC. 15. *Repealing Clause.*** - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, and rules and
16 regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are amended, repealed or modified
17 accordingly.
18

19 **SEC. 16. *Effectivity.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the
20 *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.
21

22 *Approved,*