

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 9343



Introduced by Representative CAMILLE A. VILLAR

AN ACT
CREATING A DENTAL UNIT IN EVERY RURAL HEALTH UNIT UNDER THE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AS PART OF THE PRIMARY APPROACH IN THE
DELIVERY OF HEALTH SERVICES AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR

Explanatory Note

Article II, Section 15 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution mandates the State to "protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them."

The Constitution also mandates the State to "adopt and integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall endeavor to make essential goods, health and other social services available to all the people at affordable cost. There shall be priority for the needs of the underprivileged sick, elderly, disabled, women, and children. The State shall endeavor to provide free medical care to paupers" (Article XIII, Section 11).

Republic Act 11223 or the Universal Health Care Act of 2019 prescribes reforms in the health care system and aims to provide affordable, quality and comprehensive health services to encourage Filipinos to obtain oral health services.

Dental caries (tooth decay) and periodontal diseases (gum diseases) are the two most common oral health diseases affecting Filipinos¹. In 2018, the initial results of the National Survey on Oral Health showed 72% of Filipinos having dental carries

¹ "Oral Health Promotion: A Yes to a Healthier Nation." 4 Feb. 2020. National Nutrition Council.
<https://www.nnc.gov.ph/regional-offices/mindanao/region-x-northern-mindanao/3516-oral-health-promotion-a-yes-to-a-healthier-nation>

while 43% suffer from gum diseases. Figures may be higher as data was obtained from a 2018 survey on national health.

The Health department branded it as a “silent epidemic”² as oral health continues to be a serious health concern in the Philippines.

Eight out of 10 children also suffer from childhood carries or decaying baby teeth. If not treated early and properly, children will suffer in the future on their way to adulthood as they are more susceptible to more serious periodontal diseases.

Dental health problems also affect the quality of lives of Filipinos due to the excruciating pain and discomfort associated with dental diseases, and often lead to skipping school or calling in sick to work.

This proposed legislation is being pushed to strengthen the national oral health program and protect Filipinos from declining oral health, which has been exacerbated by the pandemic that limited the movements of people and immobilized seeking of immediate oral health attention.

But records and reports also suggest that adults and children alike have been suffering from various dental health problems even before the pandemic. Tooth decay and gum diseases have been observed in most Filipinos for decades³.

This bill seeks to promote oral health awareness and preventive dental healthcare by establishing a dental unit in every rural health unit (RHU) in the country. As of 2019, there were 2,597 RHUs or urban health centers across the Philippines⁴.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this measure is earnestly sought.


CAMILLE A. VILLAR

² Crisostomo, S. “73 million Pinoys suffering from tooth decay” 25 May 2023. The Philippine Star. <https://www.philstar.com/nation/2023/05/25/2268760/73-million-pinoys-suffering-tooth-decay>

³ Luczon, N. “Tooth decay, gum diseases still prevalent in 87% of Pinoys: DOH.” 3 Feb. 2022. Philippines News Agency. <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1167016>

⁴ The PCIJ Data Team. 11 Sept. 2019. “Dengue, doctors, hospital beds: Ne’er the twain shall meet?” Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism. <https://pcij.org/data/240/public-healthcare-in-the-philippines#:~:text=There%20are%20currently%202%2C597%20RHUs,DOH%27s%20target%20of%201%3A20%2C000.>

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

SEC. 1. Declaration of Policy. - It is the policy of the State:

- a. To pursue the Primary Health Care Approach in the delivery of health services and to undertake the appropriate health human resource development for this policy; and
- b. To promote preventive dental healthcare in the rural areas as part of the Primary Health Care strategy.

SEC. 2. Definition of Terms. -

- a. Rural Health Unit - also known as Main Health Center. It is composed of a doctor, a nurse and a midwife. Its function is to carry out the public health functions of the Department of Health which includes both preventive and curative health care.
- b. Dental Unit - composed of a public health dentist and Barangay Health Worker as a dental aide.

SEC. 3. Creation of Dental Unit. - As part of the Primary Health Care Approach, there is hereby created a dental unit in every rural health unit under the supervision of the Department of Health.

SEC. 4. Funding. - The amount necessary for the purpose of this Act shall be funded out of the appropriations of the Department of Health. Thereafter, such amount, as may be necessary for the implementation of this Act, shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

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

SEC. 6. Separability Clause. - If any part of this Act shall be held unconstitutional or invalid, other provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

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

SEC. 8. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the Official Gazette and in any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,