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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Introduced by Representative Rufus B. Rodriguez

House Bill No. 9783

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Republic Act No. 2382 or "The Medical Act of 1959" as amended by Republic Act Nos. 4224 and 5946 has served as the legal basis and foundation of the medical profession in the country for the longest time. However, the 21st century has changed the content, context and delivery of medical education and the practice of the medical profession in view of the changing demands of the healthcare system, the development of cutting-edge technologies, the entry of WTO-GATS and other relevant international agreements as well as the internationalization of education and practice of the profession. Thus, the need to bring the Medical Act of 1959 into the 21st century through the necessary and appropriate amendments that would quickly make medical education and practice respond to the current circumstances and fast-paced changes in the new world order brought about by globalization.

Proposals to amend certain sections in the present law include Sections 6,7, 8, 9 and 12. Additional provisions has been included to address the apparent gaps brought about by international trends and developments and the impacts of globalization in the movement or mobility of medical students and professionals.

With the proposed amendment of Sections 6, the Philippine medical curriculum or the Doctor of Medicine degree is brought at par with international trends and developments where most countries have adopted an integrated, compressed and enhanced medical curriculum straight from K-12. There are only 4 countries in the world today that is still requiring a full bachelor's degree as a pre-requisite to the Doctor of Medicine degree and one of them is the Philippines. Under the old setup, the completion of the regular MD degree will take around 9 years including the compulsory 1 year Internship. With the proposed amendments, the duration will be at least 6 years including the 1-year internship.

The proposed amendments in Sections 7 shall enhance the admission requirements to the new MD curriculum/degree without prejudice to the establishment of a national eligibility examinations for medicine for admission to the MD degree for both Filipinos and foreign students.

The proposed amendments in Sections 9 shall do away with the requirement of reciprocity which is no longer the prevailing trend in international relations but instead resort to the guiding principles and pillars of the WTO-GATS, other relevant international agreements, and mutual recognition arrangements being practiced globally.

This amendment will greatly enhance the country's positioning as a hub in medical education and training in the Asia-Pacific considering the presence of thousands of foreign medical students in various Philippine medical schools of various nationalities which numbers to at least 20,000 medical students in Philippine medical schools nationwide.

To meet the challenges of improving the quality of health care of our citizenry through quality medical education and relevant medical practice as well as address the imperatives of globalization of medical education and the practice of profession, the passage of this bill is urgently requested.

RUFUS B. RODRIGUEZ

NINETEENTH CONGRESS)
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House Bill No. 9783

AN ACT
AMENDING CERTAIN SECTIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 2382, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "MEDICAL ACT OF 1959", AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. Section 6 of Republic Act No. 2382 otherwise known as the "Medical Act of 1959" is hereby amended to read as follows:

> **"SEC. 6. *THE DOCTOR OF MEDICINE Degree*.-** The Doctor of Medicine degree shall be undertaken for a duration of six (6) years, inclusive of a one (1) year or 12 months Internship (post-graduate internship), provided, however, that the CHED-recognized medical schools are allowed reasonable leeway to adopt a curriculum that is consistent with its academic freedom, vision-mission and following sound teaching methodologies and delivery systems for both Filipinos and international students.
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> The CHED in consultation with the Board of Medicine and the Technical Panel for Medical Education shall develop, design and implement the policies and standards for the new medical degree and an appropriate curriculum that shall incorporate new technologies and methodologies in delivering a high-quality and enhanced medical education and training consistent with local needs and international practices, provided, however, that said curriculum shall be composed of core curricular and clinical subjects, the completion of which leads to the conferment of the degree of Doctor of Medicine and grants the holder the eligibility to take the Physician Licensure Examination".

SEC 2. Section7 of Republic Act No. 2382 otherwise known as the "Medical Act of 1959" is hereby amended to read as follows:

> **"SEC. 7. *ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS*.** The medical college may admit any student to the Doctor of Medicine program, both Filipinos and international students, subject to reasonable admission requirements which shall include the submission of (a) a certificate showing completion of the Senior High School or K-12 program; (b) a certificate of eligibility for admission to the medical degree program ; (c) a certificate of good moral character; and in the case of international students, the requirement of Certificate of Eligibility and/or Acceptance, Visa and other similar documents; (d) favorable results of the NMAT or its equivalent in the case of international students; and other reasonable requirements as may be determined by the CHED and the medical schools in the exercise of academic freedom.
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> The CHED in coordination with the Board of Medical Education

may implement a screening examination or system of assessment to determine the eligibility of prospective medical students for admission to the Doctor of Medicine program provided, however, that the present NMAT may be considered as an equivalent , and provided further that , in the case of international students who have passed similar examinations or assessments determinative of the eligibility and fitness to enter the medical course in other jurisdictions, the same be may be considered as equivalent."

SEC 3. Section 8 of Republic Act No. 2382 otherwise known as the "Medical Act of 1959" is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 8. ***PREREQUISITE TO THE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE****.* No person shall engage in the practice of medicine in the Philippines unless the person:

a) Holds a valid certificate of registration and a valid professional identification card issued by the PRC; and

b) Holds a valid permanent/special/temporary/provisional permit issued by the Board of Medicine, or unless exempted by this Act or other related laws from holding any of the foregoing certificates of registration.

SEC 4. Section 9 of Republic Act No. 2382 otherwise known as the "Medical Act of 1959" is hereby amended to read as follows:

SEC. 9. ***EXAMINATION REQUIRED AND*** **QUALIFICATIONS** ***OF APPLICANTS FOR THE PHYSICIAN'S LICENSURE EXAMINATION.*** – All applicants for registration prior to the issuance of certificate of registration and a professional identification card as a physician, shall be required to pass the licensure examination for physicians as provided for in this Act, and shall be subject to the payment of the fees prescribed by the PRC.

All applicants for the physicians' licensure examination must possess all qualifications and none of the disqualifications hereunder set forth as follows:

a) A citizen of the Philippines or of a foreign country or State who is a holder of the degree of Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) or its equivalent conferred by a duly CHED-recognized College of Medicine in the Philippines;
b) A citizen of the Philippines or of a foreign country or State who acquired a Doctor of Medicine degree or equivalent at a foreign medical institution the degree/diploma of which is recognized in the Philippines;
c) Is mentally, emotionally, and physically sound with a certificate of good moral character signed by the proper authorities of the school where the applicant is a graduate;
d) Has not been convicted by final judgment by a court of any criminal offense; and
e) Has completed a one (1)-year post graduate medical internship.

The list of foreign countries, whose diplomas of higher medical institutions are recognized in the Philippines, shall be determined by the Commission on Higher Education in consultation with the Board of Medical Education and other concerned agencies."

SEC 5. *Special, Temporary, Provisional, or Conditional Permit or Registration to Practice Medicine in the Philippines*. – A foreign citizen who is enrolled in his country as a medical practitioner in accordance with the laws regulating the registration of medical practitioners in that country may be permitted ***SPECIAL, TEMPORARY, PROVISIONAL, OR CONDITIONAL PERMIT OR REGISTRATION*** in the Philippines as the case may be for such period and in such manner as may be specified by the regulations of the PRC and Board of Medicine.

SEC 6. *Implementing Rules and Regulations*. – Within ninety (90) days after the approval of this Act, the CHED, PRC, and the Board of Medical Education in consultation with appropriate government agencies and other stakeholders, shall promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC 7. *Separability Clause*. – If any part or provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC 8. *Repealing Clause*. – All laws, orders, issuances, circulars, rules and regulations or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC 9. *Effectivity Clause*. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,