

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. 9900



Introduced by Representative CAMILLE A. VILLAR

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF NURSES, ASSIGNING AT LEAST ONE
REGISTERED NURSE FOR EVERY BARANGAY IN THE PHILIPPINES, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

Explanatory Note

The Philippine economy experienced a surge in growth in 2001 due to the increased demand for Filipino professionals abroad, foremost of which is the demand for registered nurses. This demand for Filipino nurses abroad helped fuel the Philippine economy with the remittances they sent to the country. However, the foreign demand for Filipino nurses has waned through the years, thus leaving many of our nurses unemployed and/or underemployed here in the Philippines. Last year, it was cited that there are about 124,000 licensed and registered Filipino nurses who are jobless, underemployed or are doing non-related work based on data from the Department of Health (DOH).

The unemployment and/or underemployment of our nurses here or their non-deployment for abroad should not be considered a problem, but must be viewed as an opportunity. The vast resources of competent Filipino nurses actually present a welcome opportunity for our government to improve the delivery of health services in the country, particularly in far-flung barangays normally not catered by the conventional government health centers. The government may engage the services of these nurses to be at the forefront of the government health care programs.

The attached bill proposes that the government mobilize and utilize these unemployed or underemployed nurses by dispatching at least one registered nurse to every barangay in the Philippines. This will not only address the problem of the unemployment and underemployment of our professional nurses, but will be considered a leap in improving the health service delivery in the country.

The duties of each dispatched nurse include educating their respective barangays on the importance of health, hygiene, sanitation, and wellness. Their goal is not only to address the immediate medical needs of the community, but also, through education, to prevent illnesses and ailments. As Benjamin Franklin once said, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

In view of the foregoing, I recommend the immediate passage of this bill.


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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 "A Nurse in Every Barangay Act".

Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policies.* - The State affirms labor as a primary social economic force. It shall protect the rights of workers and promote their welfare. Towards this end, it is further declared the policy of the State to promote a sustained and cultivated reservoir of national talents, preserving the skills and aptitude of our trained professionals, particularly our nurses, through the utilization and maximization of their medical knowledge that will likewise help promote the right of the people to health, thereby achieving the realization of a healthy and productive citizenry.

Sec. 3. *Program for the Employment of Nurses in Every Barangay.* - There is hereby established a program for the employment of nurses in every barangay, for the purpose of improving the delivery of public health care services, and to provide relevant and timely education on wellness, hygiene, sanitation and other health safety measures to the poorest communities in rural areas as well as underprivileged communities in the urban areas, while providing gainful employment to registered nurses and utilizing their professional competencies.

Sec. 4. *Role of Local Government Units.* - Each local government unit is mandated to employ one (1) registered nurse in every barangay within their jurisdiction. Notwithstanding the foregoing, local government units shall determine whether the need for additional registered nurses is necessary, based on the proportion of the population of the barangay.

Sec. 5. *Recruitment, Selection, and Training.* - The local government units shall secure the assistance of the Department of Health in recruiting, selecting, and in training the registered nurses employed by local government units to ensure their capability in addressing public health and wellness concerns of the barangays. For this purpose, the Department of Health is hereby mandated to issue guidelines setting the qualifications of nurses to be deployed to the barangays as well as come up with a module for the relevant training of these nurses. The guidelines to be set shall in no case discriminate against the hiring of fresh graduates or newly passed registered nurses.

Sec. 6. *Minimum Qualification of Nurses.* - Nurses engaged under the program shall have the following minimum qualifications: must have a valid license issued by the Professional Regulatory Commission; must be willing to relocate to its assigned area, even temporarily; and must have passion for public health concerns.

Sec. 7. *Stipend.* - Nurses employed under the program shall be entitled to a monthly stipend preferably equal to salary grade 15, consistent with the mandatory minimum entry-level pay for government nurses under the Philippine Nursing Act of 2002, or Republic Act No. 9173.

Sec. 8. *Duties.* - Nurses under this program are required to provide an annual health status report regarding the health and wellness of the barangay and must provide suggestions to the local government units to improve the health and wellness of all citizens of the barangay. Each deployed nurse shall render information dissemination on disease prevention, basic maternal and obstetric care, pre-natal and post-natal care, teenage pregnancy counselling, family planning and reproductive health education, nutrition, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) prevention, registration of live births, and educate barangay residents on all other important information on health, hygiene, sanitation and wellness.

Sec. 9. *Appropriations.* - The amount necessary to implement the Program under this Act shall be initially appropriated out of the funds of the respective local government units. Thereafter, the amount necessary for the full implementation of this program shall be included in the respective budget of the local government units in the General Appropriations Act.

Sec. 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within sixty days (60) from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Interior and Local Government and Department of Health shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations, as may be necessary to ensure the effective implementation of the provisions of this Act.

Sec. 11. *Separability Clause.* - If any portion or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remainder of this Act or any provisions hereof not affected thereby shall continue to be in force and effect.

Sec. 12. *Repealing Clause.* - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, rule or regulation inconsistent or contrary to the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Sec. 13. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its complete publication in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,