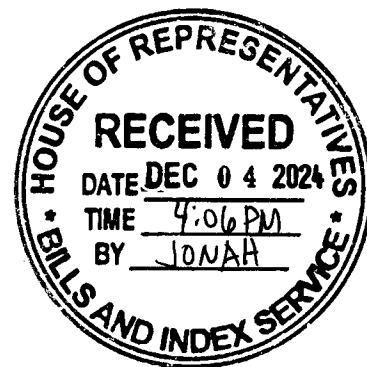




Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City, Metro Manila

**NINETEENTH CONGRESS**  
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **11175**



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**Introduced by Representative Crispin Diego “Ping” D. Remulla**

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**AN ACT**  
**STRENGTHENING THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM IN CULTURAL AND**  
**INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES BY INSTITUTIONALIZING THE TRAINING AND**  
**EMPLOYMENT OF TRIBAL HEALTH WORKERS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

The United Nations Officer for Project Services published that the Philippines is home to more than 17 million indigenous peoples, belonging to 110 distinct ethnolinguistic groups. These communities often reside in remote and isolated regions. However, similar to indigenous peoples globally, they continue to be among the poorest and most marginalized groups in society. Moreover, the World Bank reported that the life expectancy of Indigenous Peoples is as much as 20 years shorter compared to that of non-Indigenous Peoples.

This measure seeks to address the gap in the healthcare system for indigenous communities in the Philippines. In addition, this measure seeks to establish a program for Tribal Health Workers (THWs) to provide culturally appropriate healthcare services. This also ensures that indigenous communities, especially those in remote areas, have better access to healthcare services.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'R' followed by a cursive 'D' and 'Remulla'.

**CRISPIN DIEGO "PING" D. REMULLA**



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

1       **SECTION 1. Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “Tribal Health Workers  
2       Act.”

3       **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – The Philippine Constitution provides that the State  
4       shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall  
5       endeavor to make essential goods, health, and other social services available to all the people  
6       at affordable cost. It is also the policy of the State to provide cheap and affordable quality  
7       medicine and medical services to citizens in far-flung areas and indigenous communities.

8       **SEC. 3. Definition of Terms.** – As used in this Act, the following words and phrases  
9       shall be defined as:

10       a) **Barangay Health Worker** – a person who has undergone health care training  
11       programs in any accredited government or non-government organization and who  
12       voluntarily renders primary health care services in the community after having been

1 accredited to function as such by the local health board in accordance with the  
2 guidelines promulgated by the Department of Health; and

3 b) Tribal Health Workers – refers to members of ICC who have undergone health care  
4 training by either government or non-government organizations and renders  
5 voluntary health care in the tribal community.

6 **SEC. 4. Tribal Health Workers.** – All tribal communities which are located about ten  
7 kilometers (10km) from the barangay center are qualified to have tribal health workers (THW).  
8 The number of families in a community will determine the number of THW in that community  
9 – one (1) tribal health worker for every thirty (30) families.

10 **SEC. 5. Selection and Training of Tribal Health Workers.** – The tribal Chief shall  
11 appoint, in accordance with the traditions of the tribe, the tribal health worker and submit his  
12 name to the local health board who in turn shall register the appointed tribal health worker. The  
13 local health board will furnish a copy of the list of tribal health workers to the DOH which shall  
14 maintain a national list of tribal health workers.

15 **SEC. 6. Responsibilities of Tribal Health Workers.** – The THWs are responsible for  
16 providing primary health care to members of the tribes. He is also responsible for assisting if  
17 needed, sick person/s to the nearest clinic or hospital.

18 Since primary health care may use herbal medicines that are traditional to the tribe, the  
19 THW is mandated to establish an herbal garden in the community. The barangay LGU, the  
20 municipal LGU, and the CENRO of the DENR are hereby required to provide assistance to the  
21 THW in establishing such an herbal garden.

22 **SEC. 7. Benefits of Tribal Health Workers.** – Similar to the Barangay Health  
23 Workers who are provided with a number of benefits under Republic Act No. 7883, the THW  
24 are granted the following incentives and benefits:

- 1 a) Free health care insurance and hospitalization – the THW shall be provided with  
2 free PhilHealth insurance. In addition, the THW shall be entitled to free  
3 hospitalization in case of work-related sickness or injury. The Department of Social  
4 Welfare and Development (DSWD) shall provide the insurance and bear the  
5 expenses of the hospitalization of the THW. The DSWD shall work closely with  
6 the local health boards in granting these benefits to the THW, particularly in  
7 identifying those who are entitled to such.
- 8 b) Educational benefits – the THW is entitled to free tuition in public high schools and  
9 universities. Should the THW not be able to avail of this incentive, he is allowed to  
10 transfer this benefit to any one of his/her legitimate children. This benefit can only  
11 be availed by active THWs.
- 12 c) Continuing training – the DOH shall be responsible for providing the continuing  
13 training for the THW on new and emerging primary health care management as  
14 well as new and merging herbal medicines.
- 15 d) Free legal services – the Public Attorney’s Office shall provide free legal advice to  
16 THW if there are occasions that the latter needs one; provided, however, that the  
17 occasion arises from or in connection with the exercise of his duties and  
18 responsibilities as THW.

19 **SEC. 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – The Department of Health (DOH),  
20 the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Department of Interior and  
21 Local Government (DILG), and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) shall  
22 be responsible for the formulation of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of this  
23 Act which shall be formulated within one hundred fifty (150) days upon its approval.

24 **SEC. 9. Separability Clause.** – If any part of this Act is declared unconstitutional or  
25 invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

1           **SEC. 10. Non-Impairment Clause.** - Nothing in this Act shall be construed as to  
2 diminish, impair, or repeal rights recognized, grant, or made available to disadvantaged,  
3 marginalized, or specific sectors under existing laws.

4           **SEC. 11. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations or parts  
5 thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

6           **SEC. 12. Effectivity.** - This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its  
7 publication in the Official Gazette or in any major newspaper of general circulation in the  
8 Philippines.

Approved,