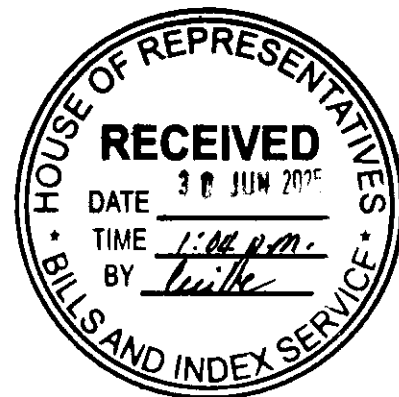


Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City

Twentieth Congress  
First Regular Session

**HOUSE BILL NO. 287**



---

Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE LAARNI LAVIN ROQUE**

---

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Section 15, Article II of the Constitution provides that "The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill consciousness among them." It is then the obligation of the State to enhance the delivery of health services to the people.

This bill seeks to establish the Bukidnon Farmers Research and Medical Center in the City of Valencia, Province of Bukidnon which shall be placed under the supervision and control of the Department of Health in partnership and coordination with the Department of Agriculture and the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine.

The province of Bukidnon is known as the "Food Basket of Mindanao" being a major producer of rice, corn, and sugarcane. The economy of Bukidnon is primarily based on agriculture, livestock, and poultry. A big number of its population are farmers and they suffer from diseases common and unique to people in their line of work. This proposed measure seeks the establishment of a specialty hospital in Valencia City, Bukidnon that will cater to the medical conditions and needs of our farmers and other agricultural workers, and more importantly - will be the center for research of the diseases and conditions unique to them which will help the whole agricultural population of the country in the long run. It will be the first of its kind in the country.

The 4<sup>th</sup> District of Bukidnon, which includes Valencia City, Pangantucan and Kalilangan, has no existing government hospital. Based on the 2020 Census of Population and Housing, the population in the City of Valencia alone totaled to 216,546. Valencia City is the most populated local government unit (LGU) of the province of Bukidnon. Despite the dense population of Valencia City, it has no existing government hospital, which will cater to the poor and marginalized constituents of the city. In times of medical

emergency which require even minor surgeries, the poor and marginalized citizens of Valencia City need to travel 40.7 kilometers to the Bukidnon Provincial Hospital located at the municipality of Maramag, which is part of 3<sup>rd</sup> District of Bukidnon. The general hospital component of the proposed farmers research medical center will also address this dire need of the city and its neighboring municipalities.

Due to the nature and location of their work, farmers are continuously exposed to various physical hazards: weather, terrain, machinery, exposure to venomous and virus-carrying reptiles and insects, toxic substances such as pesticides, fertilizers, fuels, and organic dust, stress, among others. These lead to associated health problems, including but not limited to dengue, malaria, schistosomiasis, filariasis cancer, respiratory diseases, kidney diseases, heart ailments, snake bites and bite victims of other venomous animals. However, due to poverty and limited access to social services, most ailments of our agricultural workers persist without proper medical intervention. The big number of cases will serve as a good research endeavor for the scientists and physicians to be affiliated with the facility where new treatment modalities or improvement of the existing protocols may be discovered and improved. A university - the Central Mindanao University is also located nearby, and the center can forge a partnership and affiliation for its research endeavors. A study of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) shows that in the years 2014 to 2018, the agricultural sector accounts for 24.3 percent of the labor force in the Philippines, totaling about 10 million Filipinos. They have, lamentably, the highest incidence of poverty among the basic sectors in the country in the 2015 and 2018 survey of PSA. They live in rural communities that are remote and prone to natural disasters, with some areas lacking in emergency health care services.

Reports of individuals being attacked by snakes have become frequent in Bukidnon as well as other agricultural areas in Mindanao. According to the Department of Health, snake bite is an important medical emergency and cause of hospital admission. It may result in the death or chronic disability of many active younger people, especially those involved in farming and plantation work, if not given immediate treatment. No facility in the region can produce anti-venom. An anti-venom center will be part of the research initiative of the center.

This bill proposes the establishment of a research specialty hospital that will cater specifically to the medical conditions of our farmers and other agricultural workers and conduct research to establish prevention strategies, treatment, rehabilitation and innovations in addressing farmer's and other tropical diseases. This is in line with the desire of no other than our President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. in establishing specialty and research medical centers outside of the nation's capital.

The establishment of Bukidnon Farmers Research and Medical Center in Valencia City will not only cater to the poor and marginalized farmers of the 4<sup>th</sup> District of Bukidnon. It will also serve the poor and marginalized farmers of neighboring municipalities and nearby provinces, as well as the general population in the area.

Given the above premises, the urgent passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

  
**LAARNI LAVIN ROQUE**  
Representative - 4<sup>th</sup> District, Bukidnon

Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City

Twentieth Congress  
First Regular Session

**HOUSE BILL NO. 287**

---

Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE LAARNI LAVIN ROQUE**

---

**AN ACT**  
**ESTABLISHING A SPECIALTY RESEARCH HOSPITAL IN THE CITY OF**  
**VALENCIA, PROVINCE OF BUKIDNON TO BE KNOWN AS THE**  
**BUKIDNON FARMERS RESEARCH AND MEDICAL CENTER (BFRMC),**  
**AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

**SECTION 1.** There shall be established a specialty research hospital in the City of Valencia, Province of Bukidnon, to be known as the Bukidnon Farmers Research and Medical Center (BFRMC).

**SEC. 2.** The hospital shall be under the direct control and supervision of the Department of Health (DOH) and shall be designated as a specialty and research facility and one of the apex hospitals in Northern Mindanao. Any future increase in bed capacity and upgrading of health care services and facilities shall be based on the hospital development plan which shall be prepared by the DOH.

**SEC. 3.** *Medical Assistance.* - The Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA) shall ensure that existing health benefits and medical assistance programs are strengthened to include, among others, subsidies on hospitalization and medical procedures for farmers and qualified dependents.

**SEC. 4. *Research Department for Tropical Medicine.*** - There shall be established a department for research on tropical medicine, which shall be under the direct supervision of the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM).

The department shall have the following functions:

- a) Undertake research activities in the diagnosis, control, and prevention of tropical diseases that are major causes of mortality and morbidity in the Philippines;
- b) Conduct clinical trials aimed at better understanding and control of tropical disease;
- c) Conduct regular training courses for medical and paramedical personnel in the control of common tropical diseases in the country;
- d) Provide high quality tertiary care and treatment to both inpatients and out-patients suffering from tropical diseases included within the scope of RITM's research activities;
- e) Apply for, receive, and accept bequests, grants, and donation of funds, equipment, materials and services needed for the attainment of its objectives; and
- f) Perform such other related activities as may be assigned by the Secretary of Health.

**SEC. 5. *Review and Assessment.*** – The DOH and DA shall conduct a mandatory review and assessment every five (5) years from the effectivity of this Act to ensure its proper implementation and assess the performance of the Hospital.

A report shall be submitted to the Committee on Health and Committee on Agriculture and Food on both houses of Congress within thirty (30) days from the termination of the period of review and assessment.

**SEC. 6. *Appropriations*** - The Secretary of Health shall immediately include in the Department's program the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

**SEC. 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations*** - Within sixty (60) days from the approval of this Act, the DOH, in coordination with the DA and other relevant stakeholders, shall formulate and issue the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) to fully implement the provisions of this Act.

**SEC. 8. Separability Clause** - If any provision or part of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

**SEC. 9. Repealing Clause** - All laws, executive orders, issuances, and rules and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

**SEC. 10. Effectivity** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,