

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 321



Introduced by: Hon. Iris Marie D. Montes

AN ACT
REQUIRING HEALTH FACILITIES RENDERING MATERNITY SERVICES TO
ESTABLISH LITERACY PROGRAMS FOR EXPECTANT MOTHERS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill aims to require all health facilities rendering maternity services to establish literacy programs to equip all expectant mothers with basic knowledge and skills that will promote the physical and mental well-being of the mother and ensure healthy pregnancy and delivery.

The program seeks to provide expectant mothers appropriate knowledge and skills that will provide a positive experience, ensuring women and their babies reach their full potential for health and well-being and help end preventable maternal death.

According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the UN sexual and reproductive health agency, every year, 2,400 women and girls die in the Philippines from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth.¹

A study entitled, "Mothers' Perspectives on Utilization of Maternal Health Services in Rural Health Units in Luzon: A Qualitative Study", shows that despite implementing various maternal health care programs and integrating these into Service Delivery Networks, the Philippines continues to have high maternal mortality.

Based on the mothers' experiences in their utilization of health services in primary birthing units, it found that the utilization of maternal and neonatal care services improves when mothers have a safe space to ask questions and consult.

According to the study, "Mothers often inquire about their conditions from their health care providers and would like to know more about birthing and family planning, breastfeeding, and vaccination. Patient education during and after pregnancy has improved mothers' knowledge and service satisfaction."

Moreover, it says that one way of reducing maternal mortality ratio (MMR) is by providing maternal care services that enable the education and counseling of mothers on proper maternal health and newborn care.²

¹ Maternal Health, UNFPA Philippines (<https://philippines.unfpa.org/en/topics/maternal-health>) Accessed on 09 May 2025

² Mothers' Perspectives on Utilization of Maternal Health Services in Rural Health Units in Luzon: A Qualitative Study. Acta Med Philipp [Internet]. 2022 Sep. 15 [cited 2025 May 9];56(16). Available from: <http://www.medicaphilippine.upm.edu.ph/index.php/acta/article/view/5761>

Indeed, pregnant women's access to comprehensive maternal health information and services helps reduce maternal morbidity and mortality and promotes the health and well-being of women and their babies.

In view thereof, immediate passage of this bill is earnestly requested.


IRIS MARIE D. MONTES
Kababaihan, Kabalikatan para sa Kapakanan
at Kaunlaran ng Bayan (4K) Party-list

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

SECTION 1. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them. For this reason, the State commits itself to promoting the health women during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period (after childbirth).

SEC. 2. *Coverage.* - Public and private hospitals, clinic, health centers and other similar establishments rendering maternity services shall be required to provide literacy programs to all expectant mothers.

For this purpose, literacy programs shall include topics that are essential for the mother and infant's health and development such as, but not limited to, nutrition, monitoring for diseases, and addressing potential risks. It shall cover key aspects of maternal health like mortality, morbidity, and care.

SEC. 3. *Lead Agency.* - The Department of Health (DOH), in coordination with the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act, that shall include the penalty of cancellation of license to operate plus payment of fine of not less than one hundred thousand pesos (Php100,000.00).

SEC. 4. *Appropriations.* - The amount needed for the implementation of this Act shall be charged to the appropriations for the Department of Health under the current General Appropriations Act thereafter, such sum as may be needed for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 5. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, presidential proclamation, rules and regulations or parts thereof contrary to or inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 6. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other provisions hereof.

SEC. 7. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,