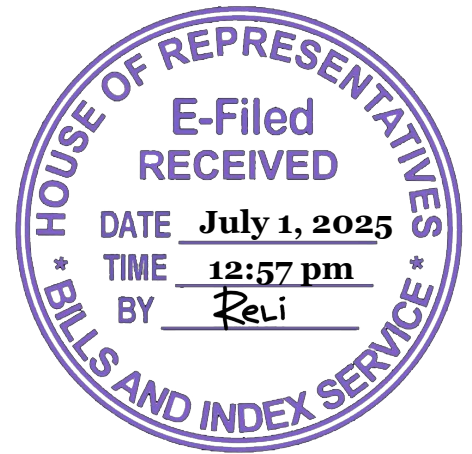


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 785

Introduced by REPRESENTATIVE MERCEDES K. ALVAREZ, MNSA

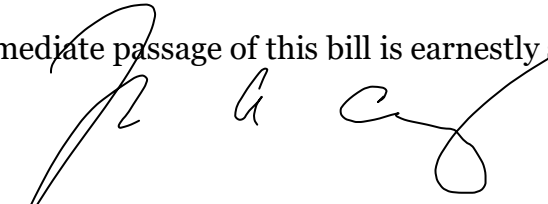
EXPLANATORY NOTE

Barangay Health Workers (“BHWs”) play a critical role in delivering primary health care services at the grassroots level. As frontliners in promoting health, wellness, and community resilience, their contributions are vital to the realization of the commitment of the State to universal health care and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Despite their indispensable role, BHWs often lack adequate support, protection, and recognition. This bill seeks to address that gap by providing a comprehensive policy framework that ensures fair compensation, access to benefits, professional development, legal protection, and representation in local health governance structures.

The proposed Magna Carta of Barangay Health Workers institutionalizes their status as essential partners in health care delivery, strengthens their rights and welfare, and supports the development of a capable, resilient, and community-based health workforce.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


ATTY. MERCEDES K. ALVAREZ, MNSA

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HOUSE BILL NO. 785

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE MAGNA CARTA OF BARANGAY HEALTH
WORKERS

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 "Magna Carta of Barangay
2 Health Workers".

3
4 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to
5 protect and promote the right to health of people and adopt an integrated and
6 comprehensive approach to health development, and pursuant thereto, it shall
7 endeavor to make essential goods, healthcare, and other social services available to all
8 the people.

9
10 In line with the commitment of the Philippines to accomplish health indicator
11 targets under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the State shall
12 adopt policies that promote the welfare and well-being of barangay health workers
13 who are the forefront of the delivery of health care at the grassroots level and
14 effectively harness their potential as partners in development.

15

16

1 Sec. 3. *Coverage.* – This Act shall apply to all barangay health workers
2 (“BHWs”) as defined under Section 3 of this Act: *Provided*, That all incentives and
3 benefits granted under this Act shall extend only to duly accredited BHWs, who have
4 undergone at least two (2) years of training: *Provided, however, That* duly registered
5 barangay health workers shall be entitled to a monthly honoraria and hazard
6 allowance as provided in Sec. 9 herein: *Provided, further, That* when the BHW
7 receives a fixed salary under a permanent appointment in any government office, by
8 election to another public office or by employment in the private sector, coverage
9 under this Act shall automatically cease and the BHW shall be covered under
10 applicable laws.

11
12 As used in this Act, the term “barangay health worker” refers to a person who
13 has undergone training under any accredited government or non-government
14 organization (“NGO”), and who voluntarily renders primary healthcare services in the
15 community after having been accredited to function as such by the local health board.

16
17 Sec. 4. *Registration.* – All BHWs shall be registered with the local health board
18 in the city or municipality in which they render service. Registered BHWs shall be
19 given appropriate proof of said registration.

20
21 The municipal and city health offices shall regularly update and maintain the
22 BHW Registry with the assistance of the BHW Federation. The BHW Registry shall be
23 subject to the approval of the municipal or city health board. The local health offices
24 shall submit a copy of the updated and duly approved registry to the Provincial Health
25 Office for consolidation and validation with the assistance of the Provincial BHW
26 Federation, which shall also be subject to the approval of the Provincial Health Board.
27 The Provincial BHW Registry shall be posted in the municipal or city bulletin board
28 and barangay health centers.

29
30 The Provincial BHW Registry shall be submitted on or before April 30 of every
31 year to the Department of Health (“DOH”) at the regional and national levels for
32 consolidation. The DOH is hereby mandated to maintain a national registry of BHWs.

33
34 In order to qualify for registration, a Barangay Health Worker must:

- 1
- 2 a) Have rendered basic community health care services continuously and
- 3 satisfactorily for at least six (6) months immediately preceding the date
- 4 of the filing of application for registration in the barangay as
- 5 recommended by the Rural Health Midwife (“RHM”) or public health
- 6 nurse assigned to the barangay and by the head of the barangay health
- 7 workers association and certified by the Sangguniang Barangay;
- 8
- 9 b) Have completed the basic orientation and training for BHWs as
- 10 prescribed by the DOH and conducted by an accredited government
- 11 agency, or DOH-recognized academic institution, or NGO;
- 12
- 13 c) Be at least eighteen (18) years of age at the date of the filing of the
- 14 application for registration; and
- 15
- 16 d) Be physically and mentally fit.
- 17

18 It shall be the duty of the municipal and city health offices, in cooperation with

19 the Provincial Health Office and the DOH, to provide BHW applicants basic

20 orientation and training within six (6) months from the date of approval of their

21 application.

22

23 *Sec. 5. Accreditation.* To further professionalize the health care services

24 rendered by the BHWs and ensure the health and welfare of the community, a duly

25 registered BHW must be accredited by the municipal or city health board.

26

27 The municipal or city health board shall issue a certificate of accreditation to

28 qualified BHWs. In order to qualify for accreditation, the applicant BHW must:

29

- 30 a) Be registered in accordance with Section 5 hereof;
- 31
- 32 b) Have satisfactorily undertaken the role of a BHW in the locality as
- 33 provided for in Section 7 hereof, for at least two (2) years of continuous

1 and satisfactory service immediately prior to the filing of application for
2 accreditation; and
3

- 4 c) Have completed a regular training program on health care service and
5 community-based health program in order to upgrade and develop the
6 skills and competency required of a BHW. The training program shall be
7 institutionalized by the DOH, in cooperation with local government
8 units (“LGUs”).
9

10 It shall be the duty of the municipal or city government, as the case maybe, in
11 cooperation with the provincial government and DOH, to provide the applicant BHWs
12 the necessary support and opportunities for accreditation.
13

14 A BHW must complete the regular training program on health care service and
15 community-based health program within five (5) years from registration.
16

17 The municipal and city health boards or through their registration and
18 accreditation committee shall act on the applications for accreditation of BHWs not
19 than later thirty (30) days from the date of application.
20

21 The DOH shall also maintain an updated roster of accredited BHWs that is
22 accessible to the general public.
23

24 *Sec. 6. Roles, Duties, and Responsibilities of Barangay Health Workers.* As one
25 of the key partners in a reformed health care delivery system, the DOH and LGUs shall
26 support BHWs as they perform the following roles:
27

- 28 a) Advocate – support, promote, and champion current health programs,
29 projects, and activities to improve access to quality health services
30 towards the improved health status of the community;
31
32 b) Educator –guide and advise the community on the current DOH and
33 health priorities of LGUs such as the importance of a birth plan and
34 facility-based delivery in the in reducing maternal and infant deaths;

1 newborn screening for the early detection of congenital metabolic
2 disorders which may lead to mental retardation and even death, among
3 others;

4
5 c) Disseminator – maintain regular communication with local professional
6 health workers on health events and updates and concerns relevant to
7 the community and inform the same top the community for appropriate
8 action, if necessary;

9
10 d) Linker – facilitate access to any group or association of the community
11 with a relevant network of or specific health and non-health service
12 providers;

13
14 e) Record Keeper – maintain updated records of health data, health
15 activities, and events in the community; and

16
17 f) Health Care Service Provider – assist and provide basic health care
18 services as may be needed in the community in any health event;

19
20 *Sec. 7. Number of Barangay Health Workers.* – Subject to relevant laws, and
21 in coordination with relevant government agencies and respective local government
22 units, the number of BHWs in every barangay shall be guided by and based on the
23 particular need of the barangay for BHW services.

24
25 The DOH shall determine the ideal ratio of barangay health workers to the
26 number of households: *Provided, That* the total number of barangay health workers
27 nationwide shall not be less than one percent (1%) of the total population.

28
29 The residents of the barangay must be given preference in the employment of
30 BHWs.

31
32 *Sec. 8. Incentives and Benefits.* – All accredited BHWs who are actively and
33 regularly performing their duties and responsibilities shall be entitled to the following
34 incentives and benefits:

- 1
- 2 a) Monthly Honoraria – in the amount of not less than Three thousand
- 3 pesos (P3,000.00), subject to adjustment based on the prevailing
- 4 market value;
- 5
- 6 b) Hazard Allowance – in an amount to be determined by the local
- 7 health board of LGU concerned, which in no case shall be less than
- 8 One thousand pesos (P1,000.00) per month, subject to existing laws,
- 9 rules, and regulations;
- 10
- 11 c) Subsistence Allowance – equivalent to the meals they take in the
- 12 course of their duty, which shall be computed in accordance with
- 13 prevailing conditions as determined by the LGU concerned, which in
- 14 no case shall be less than One hundred pesos (P100.00) per day:
- 15 *Provided, That* the accredited BHW shall render service within the
- 16 premises of isolated barangay health stations in order to make it
- 17 available at any and all times;
- 18
- 19 d) Transportation Allowance – not less than One thousand pesos
- 20 (P1,000.00) per month, subject to auditing rules and regulations, on
- 21 the condition that the availment of transportation services are in line
- 22 with the performance of the official duties and responsibilities of the
- 23 BHWs;
- 24
- 25 e) One-Time Gratuity Cash Incentive – not less than Ten thousand
- 26 pesos (P10,000.00) in recognition of the loyalty and dedication of the
- 27 BHWS and for having continuously and satisfactorily served for at
- 28 least fifteen (15) years;
- 29
- 30 f) Discount Privileges – for all BHWs who are entitled to twenty percent
- 31 (20%) discount on all the items enumerated under Section 4(a) of
- 32 Republic Act No. 9994, otherwise known as the Expanded Senior
- 33 Citizens Act of 2010: *Provided, That* the privileges shall not be

1 claimed if the BHW is eligible for a higher discount as may be granted
2 by the commercial establishment and/or other existing laws.

3
4 The commercial establishment may claim the discount granted under
5 this section as tax deduction based on the cost of goods sold or
6 services rendered: *Provided, That* the discount shall be allowed as
7 deduction from the gross income for the same taxable year that the
8 discount is granted: *Provided further,* That the total amount of the
9 claimed tax deduction net of VAT, if applicable, shall be included in
10 their gross sales receipt for tax purposes and shall be subject to
11 proper documentation and to the provisions of the National Internal
12 Revenue Code of 1997, as amended.

13
14 g) Training, Education, and Career Enrichment Programs – The DOH
15 shall, in coordination with the Department of Education (“DepEd”),
16 Commission on Higher Education (“CHED”), Technical Education
17 and Skills Development Authority (“TESDA”), DOH-recognized
18 academic institutions, other concerned agencies and non-
19 government organizations, provide information on and
20 opportunities for education and career enrichment for accredited
21 BHWs;

22
23 h) Health Benefits – such as free medical care, emergency assistance,
24 and mandatory and immediate membership in the Philippine Health
25 Insurance Corporation as indirect contributors;

26
27 i) Insurance Coverage – All BHWs shall be granted insurance coverage
28 and benefits from the Government Service Insurance System
29 (“GSIS”) which shall be borne by the LGU concerned. For this
30 purpose, the GSIS shall design an insurance benefit package suited
31 to the needs and status of BHWs;

32
33 j) Sick and Maternity Leaves – All BHWs shall be entitled to sick and
34 maternity leaves as prescribed by the Local Health Board: *Provided,*

1 *That*, the BHWs shall continue to receive their monthly honoraria
2 while on leave, for such period in accordance with existing laws and
3 practices;
4

5 k) Cash Gift – All accredited BHWs are entitled to cash gift of not less
6 than the minimum monthly honoraria to be given every December
7 from the general fund of the barangay or from such other funds
8 appropriated by the national government for the purpose;
9

10 l) Disability Benefit – An accredited BHW who sustains injury or
11 sickness in the course of the performance of their duties shall be
12 entitled to Two thousand pesos (P2,000.00) for every year of service;
13

14 m) Civil Service Eligibility – A second grade eligibility shall be granted
15 to accredited BHWs who have rendered five (5) years continuous
16 service as such: *Provided, That*, should a BHW become a regular
17 employee of the government, the total numbers of years served as
18 such shall be credited to the BHWs service in computing th
19 retirement benefits;
20

21 n) Free Legal Services – Legal representation and consultation services
22 shall be immediately provided by the Public Attorney's Office to an
23 accredited BHW in cases of coercion, interference, and in other civil
24 and criminal cases filed by or against BHWs arising out of or in
25 connection with the performance of their duties as such; and
26

27 o) Preferential Access to Loan – The DOH in coordination with other
28 concerned government agencies shall provide, within one hundred
29 eighty (180) days after the effectivity of this Act, a mechanism that
30 shall provide BHWs organized access to loan services. The agencies
31 providing loan services will set aside one percent (1%) of their
32 loanable funds for organized BHW groups that have community-
33 based income generating projects in support of health programs or
34 activities.

1 Notwithstanding the limitations under this section, all registered
2 BHWs shall be entitled to monthly honoraria and hazard allowance.

3
4 The LGUs concerned shall also endeavor to provide other health
5 benefits to BHWs not otherwise provided by law.

6
7 Sec. 9. *Annual Review.* – The local health boards shall conduct an annual
8 review of the BHW program, performance, as well as the benefits, incentives and
9 allowances enumerated in the immediately preceding Section taking into
10 consideration the current consumer price index as published by the Philippine
11 Statistics Authority.

12
13 Sec. 10. *Prohibition on Discrimination.* – Discrimination against any BHW by
14 reason of gender, civil status, creed, religious, or political beliefs and ethnic groupings
15 in the exercise of their functions and responsibilities is hereby prohibited.

16
17 Sec. 11. *Protection of Barangay Health Workers.* – No accredited BHW shall
18 be removed except for a valid cause as determined by the Local Health Board (“LHB”).
19 The LHB shall resolve termination cases against BHWs judiciously and not later than
20 ninety (90) days from the receipt of a complaint: *Provided, That* if a BHW is found to
21 be unjustly removed from service, the BHW shall be entitled to reinstatement without
22 loss of benefits and incentives from the time of termination up to the time of
23 reinstatement.

24
25 Sec. 12. *Grievance Mechanism.* – The LHB shall establish a grievance
26 mechanism as a means of processing complaints of BHWs against alleged acts of
27 discrimination and unjust removal from the service. The decisions rendered by the
28 LHB shall be final and executory.

29
30 Sec. 13. *Municipal, City, Provincial, and National Federation of Barangay*
31 *Health Workers.* – There shall be an organization of accredited BHWs for the purpose
32 of electing the municipal, city, provincial, and national-level federation in order to
33 ventilate, articulate, and crystalize issues affecting health care delivery system and

1 with utmost regard to service to patients and the continuous operation of barangay
2 health services in the interest of public health, safety, or survival of patients.

3
4 The BHW federation for municipalities, cities, and provinces shall elect their
5 respective local federation boards of directors, and a set of national officers to
6 comprise the national board of directors to be headed by a president. A Secretary-
7 General shall be chosen from among the national federation members to manage the
8 day-to-day operation and activities of the federation. The respective boards of
9 directors may create such other positions as may be necessary for the management of
10 the affairs of the local and national federation.

11
12 *Sec. 14. Representation in the Local Health Board and Primary Health Care*
13 *Provider Network.* – The President of the municipal or city federation of BHWs shall
14 be a member of the municipal or city local health board. The respective presidents of
15 the federation of BHWs of each city and municipality federation of a province shall
16 elect from among themselves their representative to the provincial health board:
17 *Provided, That* the BHW representatives to the local health boards shall not be allowed
18 to vote on the registration, accreditation, and disciplinary or removal complaints of
19 BHWs.

20
21 The BHWs shall also be part of the health care provider network, in the
22 implementation of health care services and programs.

23
24 *Sec. 15. Prohibition on Engaging in Partisan Political Activity.* – No BHW shall
25 engage in any partisan political activity.

26
27 *Sec. 16. Continuous Capacity Building.* – The DOH shall conduct continuous
28 capacity building for BHWs that will enhance and upgrade their knowledge and skills
29 through various forms including online learning and multimedia in major Philippine
30 dialects.

31
32 The DOH shall, in coordination with TESDA and other concerned agencies,
33 assist the LGUs in the development of education modules or materials to promote the

1 collective experiences and learnings of BHWs as well as to promote traditional and
2 complementary medicine.

3
4 The LGUs shall endeavor to establish their own training centers for their BHWs
5 and other health workers in coordination with the TESDA, NGOs, and other agencies
6 concerned.

7
8 The LGUs shall also implement a development program for BHWs that will
9 allow them to benefit from the ladderized training as provided under Republic Act No.
10 10968, otherwise known as the Philippine Qualifications Framework Act, and
11 Republic Act No. 10647, otherwise known as the Ladderized Education Act of 2014,
12 including academic credits for health-related courses.

13
14 *Sec. 17. Observance of Barangay Health Workers Day.* – Every barangay shall
15 commemorate BHW Day during April 7 of every year in recognition of the service of
16 Barangay Health Workers, their heroic services in times of crises, and their
17 indispensable role in promoting health and wellness among the citizenry.

18
19 The DOH, in cooperation with the Department of the Interior and Local
20 Government (“DILG”) and all local government units shall hold simple ceremonies or
21 activities to highlight the indispensable role of BHWs in nation-building.

22
23 *Sec. 18. Penalty Clause.* – Any local government official who violates any
24 provision of this Act may be administratively and criminally charged in accordance
25 with law.

26
27 *Sec. 19. Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the implementation of this
28 Act shall be charged against the National Tax Allotment of the LGUs, other local funds,
29 the special health fund under Republic Act No. 11223, otherwise known as the
30 “Universal Health Care Act”.

31
32 *Sec. 20. Implementing Rules and Regulations.* The DOH and DILG, in
33 consultation with the DepEd, GSIS and other concerned government agencies and
34 non-governmental entities, shall promulgate, not later than one hundred eighty days

1 (180) days upon the effectivity of this Act, the necessary rules and regulations for its
2 effective implementation: *Provided*, That the failure to promulgate such rules and
3 regulations shall not prevent the implementation of this Act upon its effectivity.
4

5 Sec. 21. *Separability Clause* – . If any part or provision of this Act is declared
6 invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts of this Act or any provision not
7 affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.
8

9 Sec. 22. *Repealing Clause*. – Republic Act No. 7883, otherwise known as the
10 Barangay Health Workers' Benefits and Incentives Act of 1995 is hereby repealed. All
11 laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, which are inconsistent with this
12 Act are hereby repealed or amended or accordingly.
13

14 Sec. 23. *Effectivity*. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its
15 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation in the
16 Philippines.

Approved,