

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1528



Introduced by: Rep. Keith Micah "Atty. Mike" D.L. Tan

AN ACT
AUTHORIZING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (DOH) TO SET AND APPROVE THE BED
CAPACITY OF ALL DOH HOSPITALS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Department of Health (DOH) developed the National Objectives for Health (NOH) 2023-2028, which is aptly titled, "*Sa Bagong Pilipinas, Bawat Buhay Mahalaga*," outlining strategic priorities and actionable targets that align with our overarching national vision. The initiative encompasses both infrastructure development and service delivery improvements, targeting fundamental gaps in the current healthcare landscape. By 2028, the agenda aims to ensure that every ambulatory care facility, school, and workplace delivers integrated primary care services, moving away from fragmented healthcare delivery toward a holistic model that addresses prevention, treatment, and wellness comprehensively. This transformation includes doubling the number of provinces with adequate hospital bed capacity from 27% to 60%, ensuring that specialized medical centers achieve 100% functionality, and making essential medicines more affordable by maintaining their cost below four times the international reference price.

The World Health Organization recommends a minimum of 2.5 to 3 hospital beds per 1,000 population, though this standard can vary based on demographic factors, disease patterns, and healthcare delivery models. When examining the Philippines' current situation, the fact that nearly three-quarters of provinces fall below adequate bed capacity ratios indicates a systemic infrastructure challenge that has profound implications for healthcare delivery. This shortage is particularly acute in rural and remote provinces, where geographic isolation compounds the problem by making it difficult for residents to access alternative healthcare facilities in neighboring areas. The uneven distribution of hospital beds across the archipelago creates a two-tiered healthcare system where urban centers, particularly Metro Manila and major regional cities, concentrate most of the available bed capacity while rural provinces struggle with severe shortages¹.

The ambitious target of increasing adequate bed-to-population ratios to 60% of provinces by 2028 represents more than doubling the current capacity, requiring substantial investment in healthcare infrastructure, human resources, and operational systems. This expansion involves not merely constructing new hospital facilities but ensuring they are properly equipped, staffed, and integrated into the broader healthcare network.

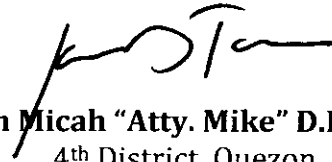
Presently, a DOH hospital can only increase its bed capacity through legislation. As such, adjusting the bed capacity of a public hospital to be able to better serve patients, especially the poor, has to compete with thousands of bills in Congress and more often than not, these do not get approved or once approved, the need has already changed.

By allowing the DOH to administratively set and approve the authorized bed capacity of its hospitals, we remove one barrier that impedes the efficient delivery of health service.

¹ <https://doh.gov.ph/data-publications/national-objectives-for-health-2023-2028/>

This bill seeks to address the congestion of patients in public hospitals by authorizing the Department of Health (DOH) to increase the bed capacity of its retained hospitals and allowing it to promulgate guidelines that will be used in evaluating and approving changes in bed capacity. It authorizes the DOH to increase the bed capacity and to right-size the authorized bed capacity of its retained hospitals, as necessary.

It is for these reasons that approval of this measure is earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Tan', is positioned above the printed name.

Keith Micah “Atty. Mike” D.L. Tan
4th District, Quezon

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

SECTION 1. This Act shall be known as the "DOH Hospital Bed Capacity Rationalization Act."

SEC. 2. This Act shall streamline the process for approving changes in the authorized bed capacities of all Department of Health (DOH) hospitals.

SEC. 3. Authority is hereby granted to the DOH to adjust and approve the authorized bed capacities of all DOH hospitals. Thereafter, the DOH shall, through an administrative order, determine the bed capacities of DOH government hospitals, subject to specific guidelines that shall be issued and promulgated, within three (3) months after the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 4. The DOH shall provide Congress, through the Committee on Health of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Health and Demography of the Senate, an annual report of hospitals with approved bed capacity, along with the necessary funding requirements.

SEC. 5. The Secretary of Health shall include in the Department's programs the funding requirements for the increase in bed capacity of each of the hospital in accordance with the Philippine Hospital Development Plan and the Modernization/Development Plan of each hospital, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 6. The DOH shall formulate the rules and regulations to implement this Act within ninety (90) days of its effectivity.

SEC. 7. All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 8. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,