



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **1785**



Introduced by Rep. Edwin Ongchuan

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Barangay Health Workers (BHWs) are indispensable partners in the delivery of primary health care services in the Philippines. They serve as the community's first line of defense in health promotion, disease prevention, maternal and child care, immunization campaigns, health education, and public health surveillance, especially in rural, remote, and underserved areas where access to formal health facilities is limited.

Republic Act No. 7883, or the Barangay Health Workers' Benefits and Incentives Act of 1995, formally recognized the service and contributions of BHWs, providing for their accreditation and granting them basic incentives. However, despite their critical role, many BHWs continue to serve on a voluntary basis and in many cases, they lack guaranteed access to health insurance coverage themselves—even as they are tasked with promoting health and wellness among the people they serve.

Under Republic Act No. 7875, as amended by Republic Act No. 10606 or the *National Health Insurance Act of 2013* and Republic Act No. 11223 otherwise known as the *Universal Health Care Act of 2019*, the National Health Insurance Program (NHIP) aims to cover all Filipinos, with the State subsidizing premiums for indigents and other vulnerable groups through the Sponsored Program. However, there is currently no national legal requirement that Local Government Units (LGUs) automatically include Barangay Health Workers as sponsored members. Instead, the decision to sponsor their premiums is often left to the discretion of individual LGUs, resulting in unequal coverage across the country.

This proposed measure seeks to close the policy gap by amending RA 7883 to include a clear requirement for all LGUs to allocate funds and ensure payment of PhilHealth premiums for all accredited Barangay Health Workers within their jurisdictions. By ensuring BHWs are covered as sponsored members of PhilHealth, we guarantee them access to necessary health services under the "No Balance Billing" policy in government facilities.

Ensuring that BHWs have reliable health insurance is not just a matter of social justice but of sound public health strategy. By protecting the health and well-being of those who care for our communities, we strengthen our primary health care system and help realize the goals of universal health care for all Filipinos.

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

EDWIN ONGCHUAN
Representative

Second District, Northern Samar



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**AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7883, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE
"BARANGAY HEALTH WORKERS' BENEFITS AND INCENTIVES ACT OF 1995,"
TO PROVIDE FOR MANDATORY SPONSORSHIP OF PHILHEALTH PREMIUM
CONTRIBUTIONS BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS**

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

SECTION 1. Short Title – This Act shall be known as the "Barangay Health Workers' Benefits and Incentives Act of 2025".

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to strengthen primary health care delivery by promoting the welfare of Barangay Health Workers ("BHWs"). In recognition of their essential role, the State shall ensure that accredited BHWs have guaranteed access to health services through enrollment as sponsored members of the National Health Insurance Program ("NHIP") administered by PhilHealth.

SECTION 3. A new section is hereby added after Section 6 of Republic Act No. 7883, to read as follows:

"SECTION 6-A - Mandatory Sponsorship of PhilHealth Premium Contributions.

All Local Government Units (LGUs)—including provinces, cities, municipalities, and barangays—are hereby mandated to allocate funds and ensure the payment of PhilHealth premium contributions for all accredited Barangay Health Workers within their jurisdiction.

Such Barangay Health Workers shall be enrolled as sponsored members of the National Health Insurance Program in accordance with Republic Act No. 7875, as amended by Republic Act No. 10606 (National Health Insurance Act of 2013), and Republic Act No. 11223 (Universal Health Care Act of 2019).

For purposes of this section, accredited Barangay Health Workers shall refer to those recognized under Section 3 of this Act and its implementing rules and regulations."

SECTION 4. Implementing Rules and Regulations - Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Health (DOH), the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) shall jointly promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 5. Appropriations - The necessary funds for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual budgets of LGUs. For LGUs with limited fiscal capacity, national government assistance or cost-sharing mechanisms may be provided, subject to existing budgeting laws and guidelines.

SECTION 6. Separability Clause - If any provision of this Act shall be held unconstitutional or invalid, the provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 7. Repealing Clause - Existing laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, proclamations or administrative regulations that are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby amended, modified, superseded or repealed accordingly.

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

Approved,