

**Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila**

**Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session**

HOUSE BILL NO. 1885



Introduced by Hon. Alexandria P. Gonzales

EXPLANATORY NOTE

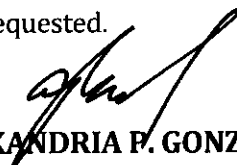
This bill seeks to establish a comprehensive charter for the National Center for Mental Health (NCMH), expanding its capacity and institutional framework in alignment with the provisions of Republic Act No. 11036, also known as the Mental Health Act, and the vision set forth in Public Works Act No. 3258, which originally appropriated funds only for the establishment of insular psychopathic asylum in the Philippines. As public awareness of mental health issues grows, there is an urgent need to modernize the structure and mandate of the NCMH to ensure it serves as a key institution in the delivery of mental health care, research, and training in the country.

Public Works Act No. 3258, enacted in 1926, was a landmark piece of legislation that laid the foundation for the establishment of the institution that would eventually become the National Center for Mental Health (NCMH). The Act provided essential funding to address the growing public health issue of mental illness at the time. However, despite the passage of 96 years since NCMH's establishment, no specific legislation has been enacted to formally define its bed capacity or to provide a comprehensive charter that clearly outlines its functions, responsibilities, and organizational structure.

On the other hand, Republic Act No. 11036 or the Mental Health Act acknowledges the right of every Filipino to mental health care and the obligation of the State to provide comprehensive, integrated, and accessible mental health services. This proposed bill establishes clear mandates for the NCMH to serve not only as a treatment facility but also as a center for research, education, and capacity building in mental health. By strengthening its institutional capacity, the NCMH will be empowered to provide leadership in mental health policy development, public awareness campaigns, and training for health professionals, thus addressing the country's mental health needs comprehensively.

In summary, this bill builds on the legacy of Public Works Act No. 3258 while aligning with the objectives of the Mental Health Act, modernizing the NCMH's infrastructure and mandate to become the national leader in mental health care, training, and research. The proposed changes will ensure that the institution remains relevant and capable of addressing the growing mental health challenges in the Philippines.

In view of the foregoing, the approval of this bill is earnestly requested.


ALEXANDRIA P. GONZALES

Republic of the Philippines
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HOUSE BILL NO. 1885

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE CHARTER OF THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH
(NCMH), DEFINING AND EXPANDING ITS MANDATE AND FUNCTIONS,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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 "National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH) Charter Act."

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is the policy of the State to protect and promote the mental health and well-being of all Filipinos, as mandated by the 1987 Philippine Constitution. Article II, Section 15 affirms that "The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them," recognizing mental health as an essential part of overall health. Likewise, Article XIII, Section 11 emphasizes the State's duty to adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health, making essential health services accessible to all at affordable costs.

To this end, the NIMH is established as the national institution responsible for the provision of mental health care, research, and training. The transformation of NCMH to NIMH shall fulfill the State's obligation under Republic Act No. 11036 (Mental Health Act) and Republic Act No. 11223 (Universal Health Care Act), ensuring that all individuals have access to necessary and high-quality mental health services, regardless of civil, socio-economic, or cultural background.

SECTION 3. *Scope and Coverage.* - This Act shall cover the reorganization, governance, and functions of the NIMH, ensuring that it operates as the primary institution for mental health care, research, training, and policy recommendation in the Philippines. NIMH shall serve as the national hub for mental health and wellness promotion and the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of individuals with mental health conditions and related neurological disorders, with the objective of fully integrating mental health services into the country's overall health system.

The scope of this Act includes the following:

1. Provision of specialized mental health services for individuals with mental, neurological, and substance use (MNS) disorders, ensuring access to quality care for all sectors of society, including vulnerable groups.
2. Development and implementation of training programs for health professionals, community health workers, and stakeholders involved in mental health services.
3. Conduct mental health research to inform the development of strategies and evidence-based policy recommendations aimed at improving mental health care delivery, prevention, and rehabilitation programs.
4. Implementation of mental health promotion, wellness advocacy, and mental health services in coordination with local government units (LGUs), providing early intervention, rehabilitation, and reintegration of individuals with mental health conditions.
5. Delivery of specialized care in fields such as child and adolescent psychiatry, geriatric mental health, forensic psychiatry, consultation-liaison psychiatry, social and community psychiatry, and addiction treatment.

The provisions of this Act shall apply to all operations of the NIMH, ensuring compliance with national standards, and establishing mechanisms for oversight monitoring, and reporting to the Department of Health (DOH) and other relevant agencies.

SECTION 4. *Organization.* - The NIMH shall operate under the control and supervision of the DOH as a specialized health care institution for mental health.

It shall be headed by a Director, assisted by an Assistant Director, both of whom shall be appointed by the Secretary of Health. The Director shall be responsible for the implementation of policies and overseeing the programs and day-to-day operations of the institution. The NIMH shall also have the necessary technical, administrative support staff, and consultants to fulfill its mandate.

The NIMH staff shall have the following divisions:

1. ***Clinical Services Division:*** Responsible for the delivery of comprehensive, high-quality patient care, including inpatient and outpatient services, individuals suffering from mental, neuro-related, and substance use (MNS) disorders, including their co-morbidities.
2. ***Training and Education Division:*** Develop and implement training programs for health professionals, community health workers, and other stakeholders to ensure a functional and competent mental health service provider network across the country, in line with the objectives of the Universal Health Care Act.

3. **Research and Policy Division:** Conduct cutting-edge research on mental health, develop innovative strategies and approaches to treatment and rehabilitation, and translate these findings for recommendations to DOH into national mental health policies and programs. It shall serve as the central repository of mental health data, contributing to evidence-based policy-making.
4. **Linkages and Community-Based Services:** Develop and implement linkages and care networking programs and coordinate with local government units (LGUs) and stakeholders to establish community-based mental health services nationwide. These efforts aim to promote early intervention, rehabilitation, and the integration of individuals with mental health conditions into society.
5. **Administrative and Support Services Division:** Provides administrative and operational support to the NIMH.
6. **Finance Division:** Manages the financial resources of the institution.

SECTION 5. Bed Capacity. - The NIMH shall operate with an institutional bed capacity of **two thousand and five hundred (2,500) beds**, which shall be scaled down as part of deinstitutionalization efforts, including strengthening referral networks and establishing community-based mental health services, and transforming the NCMH into a specialized hub for mental health training, research, and information.

The DOH shall ensure adequate staffing, equipment, and facilities to meet this capacity, consistent with the requirements of modern standards. In coordination with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and the Civil Service Commission (CSC), it shall determine the additional plantilla positions necessary to meet the institution's operational needs.

SECTION 6. Land Transfer and Property Title. - The real property, which encompasses the land and any structures or improvements on that land and under the possession of the institution, shall now be owned or reserved for, or may hereafter **be given, donated, acquired, transferred or conveyed to the NCMH** by the Philippine Government, its branches and instrumentalities, any foreign government, as well as by trust, foundations, corporations, or persons, alien or domestic, in order to carry out its purposes and objectives as set herein.

In accordance with the preceding paragraph, these properties shall be exempt from the coverage of Republic Act No. 5260, which permits a Trustee Committee to sell the Welfareville property in order to fully execute Section 29 of the Mental Health Act.

SECTION 7. Powers and Functions. - The NIMH shall have the following powers and functions in accordance with this Act:

- (a) Provide comprehensive mental health services which include diagnostic, therapeutic, rehabilitative, and preventive care for mental, neurological, and substance use disorders.

- (b) Establish and provide specialized services in areas such as child and adolescent psychiatry, geriatric mental health, forensic psychiatry, addiction treatment, and psychosocial support, in order to address the specific needs of diverse populations.
- (c) Develop and implement training programs for health professionals, including psychiatrists, psychologists, psychiatric nurses, social workers, and community health workers, to ensure the development of a competent and sustainable mental health workforce.
- (d) Conduct research to advance the understanding of mental health conditions and develop innovative strategies for treatment and rehabilitation as well as gather data to develop evidence-based strategies and policy recommendations to the DOH and other relevant government bodies to improve mental health services nationwide.
- (e) Design and implement, in partnership with LGUs and other stakeholders, community-based mental health services that facilitate wellness promotion as well as early detection, intervention, rehabilitation, and reintegration of individuals with mental health conditions into society.
- (f) Form collaborations with local and international organizations, academic and research institutions, and other relevant stakeholders to advance the goals of mental health promotion, education, and service provision.
- (g) Perform such other related activities as may be assigned by the Secretary of Health.

SECTION 8. *Role of the DOH's Mental Health Program Division.* - The Mental Health Program Division (MHD) of the DOH shall serve as the principal body responsible for coordinating with the NIMH to ensure the alignment of national mental health policies, programs, and initiatives. The NIMH, in coordination with MHD, shall provide technical guidance, establish standards, and monitor the implementation of mental health services across all DOH-retained hospitals and regional health units.

SECTION 9. *Funding.* - The initial funding for the implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current budget of the NCMH. Thereafter, the necessary funds for the operation and maintenance of the NIMH shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA).

SECTION 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - The DOH, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act within ninety (90) days from its effectivity.

SECTION 11. *Transitory Provisions.* - All existing employees of the NCMH, including medical and non-medical personnel, shall continue in their current positions, subject to the staffing requirements and the rules and regulations to be issued by the DOH under this Act.

SECTION 12. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, letters of instruction, rules, and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 13. *Separability Clause.* - If for any reason any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 14. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,