

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 2036

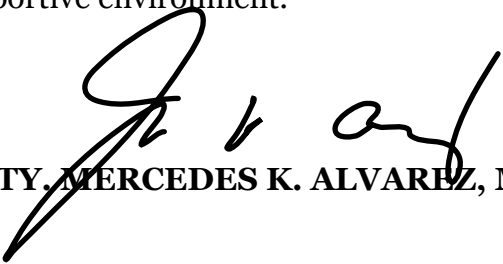
Introduced by REPRESENTATIVE MERCEDES K. ALVAREZ, MNSA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Violence against women and children (“VAWC”) remains a serious public health and human rights concern in the Philippines. Survivors of such violence often face barriers to accessing the medical and psychosocial services they urgently need. This bill seeks to address these challenges by institutionalizing the establishment of Women and Children Protection Units (“WCPUs”) in all government hospitals nationwide.

This bill mandates the creation of specialized multidisciplinary units composed of trained medical professionals, social workers, mental health experts, and law enforcement to provide comprehensive care and protection for women and children who are victims of abuse. These units will ensure proper identification, treatment, documentation, and referral of VAWC cases, following standardized protocols and best practices.

Through this measure, the State fulfills its constitutional duty to protect the rights and welfare of women and children, ensuring their access to critical health and protection services in a safe and supportive environment.


ATTY. MERCEDES K. ALVAREZ, MNSA

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HOUSE BILL NO. 2036

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AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WOMEN AND
CHILDREN PROTECTION UNITS IN ALL GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS

*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 “Women and Children
2 Protection Units Act”.

3
4 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It shall be the policy of the State to recognize
5 and promote the right to health of the people and prioritize the needs of the
6 underprivileged, sick, elderly, disabled, women, and children. The State shall support
7 the elimination of all forms of gender-based violence and promote social justice based
8 on the identification and treatment of violence against women and children (“VAWC”)
9 and in recognition of the rights of women and children as mandated by the 1987
10 Philippine Constitution, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of
11 Discrimination Against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the
12 Beijing Platform for Action.

13
14 Sec. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act, the following terms shall
15 mean the following:

- 16 a) “Children” refer to persons below 18 years old or those over but are unable
17 to fully take care of themselves or protect themselves from abuse, neglect,

1 cruelty, exploitation, or discrimination because of physical or mental
2 disability;

3 b) “Violence Against Children” refers to all forms of physical or mental violence,
4 injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation,
5 including sexual abuse. It shall also include the definitions in Republic Act
6 No. 7610, otherwise known as the Special Protection of Children Against
7 Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act, Republic Act No. 9208,
8 otherwise known as the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003, Republic
9 Act No. 9775, otherwise known as the Anti-Child Pornography Act of 2009,
10 and other pertinent laws;

11 c) “Violence Against Women” refers to any act of gender-based violence that
12 results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological harm or
13 suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, harassment, or
14 arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.

15 d) “Women and Children Protection Unit” is a unit composed of a
16 multidisciplinary team of trained physicians, social workers, mental health
17 professionals, and police providing comprehensive medical and psychosocial
18 services to women and children victims of violence;

19 e) “Child Protection Management Information System” assures the retrieval
20 and management of reports, research, and data capture of the Women and
21 Children Protection Unit (“WCPU”);

22 f) “Standard Protocol” is a protocol that is a legally binding or otherwise
23 authoritative document that provides directions for the actions of a group or
24 groups as a benchmark of performance;

25 g) “4Rs” refer to the processes of Recognition, Recording, Reporting, and
26 Referral of VAWC Abuse Cases.

27
28 Sec. 4. *Coverage.* – This shall apply to the entire health sector, including the
29 Department of Health (“DOH”) health care facilities, local government unit-supported
30 health facilities, private health care facilities, other attached agencies of the DOH,
31 development partners, and other relevant stakeholders involved in its
32 implementation.

33

34

1 Sec. 5. *General Guidelines for the Establishment of Women and Children*
2 *Protection Units.* – The following guidelines shall be followed in the establishment of
3 WCPU:

- 4 a) Policies and guidelines shall be developed in accordance with recent data
5 gathered through prevalence surveys, efficacy studies, and other research
6 done locally and internationally. Recommendations from international
7 organizations may also be utilized when appropriate;
- 8 b) Recognition, reporting, and care management of cases involving VAWC shall
9 be through medical and psycho-social teamwork, including mental health
10 intervention and local government unit response and cooperation, whenever
11 necessary;
- 12 c) Every province/chartered city shall establish at least one (1) Women and
13 Children Protection Unit;
- 14 d) All health facilities shall ensure to have competent and trained gender-
15 responsive professionals who will coordinate the services needed by women
16 and children who were victims of violence;
- 17 e) The quality of health care services shall be standardized and maintained by
18 all women and children protection units;
- 19 f) A mechanism shall be created and a harmonized database shall be
20 maintained for all reports submitted by the different women and children
21 protection units; and a
- 22 g) Public-Private Partnership shall be enhanced by establishing a service
23 delivery network within their area to ensure the sustainability of human
24 resources of WCPUs.

25
26 Sec. 6. *Steering Committee on Women and Children Protection.* – The Steering
27 Committee on Women and Children Protection, hereinafter referred to as the
28 “Committee” or “SCWP” shall be created primarily responsible for policy making,
29 coordinating, monitoring, and overseeing the implementation of this Order. The
30 Committee shall be composed of the following:

- 31 a) Undersecretary of the DOH or representative as chairperson of SCWCP;
- 32 b) Undersecretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government or
33 representative;
- 34 c) Undersecretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development or

1 representative;

2 d) A director of the DOH - Disease Prevention and Control Bureau (“DPCB”);

3 e) A director of the Department of Education;

4 f) A director of a DOH-retained hospital;

5 g) A director of DOH-Legal Service;

6 h) Executive Director of the Philippine Commission for Women;

7 i) A representative duly appointed under the by-laws of an organization or
8 Foundation with expertise and experience in Women and Child protection
9 work; and

10 j) One representative each from the Philippine Obstetrics and Gynecological
11 Society, Inc., the Philippine Pediatric Society, the Philippine College of
12 Emergency Medicine, the Philippine College of Surgeons, the Philippine
13 Academy of Family Physicians, Inc., and the Philippine Psychiatric Association.

14 The Chairperson shall appoint a Vice Chairperson from among the Committee
15 members who shall preside over the meeting in the former's absence.

16 The Committee members shall hold office for three (3) years and may be
17 reappointed or until their successors shall have been appointed and duly qualified.

18 The Committee members shall designate the Director III of the DPCB-Family
19 Health Office (“FHO”) as the Chairperson of the Technical Working Group (“TWG”),
20 as well as the members of the TWG representing the non-government organizations
21 (“NGOs”), specialty organizations, faith-based, and community-based organizations.
22 The selected staff from the Family Health Office will act as the Secretariat as may be
23 necessary to discuss and address particular concerns to ensure functionality of
24 WCPUs.

25
26 *Sec. 7. Functions of the Steering Committee on Women and Children*
27 *Protection.* –The Committee shall have the following functions:

28 a) Provide overall leadership, policy, and program directions;

29 b) Monitor the progress of the program with the assistance of the Health Facility
30 Development Bureau and the Center for Health Development using the
31 Performance Standards and Assessment Tools for Services Addressing Violence
32 Against Women in the Philippines;

33 c) Assist in the security/protection of WCPU staff from perpetrators;

34 d) Ensure that networking and inter-organizational linkages are available at the

- 1 national, regional, and local levels;
- 2 e) Resolve issues, concerns, and/or problems, make recommendations and
3 decisions that may affect the execution of the project in terms of strategic
4 direction, significant change of scope, timing, resource, and cost requirements;
- 5 f) Nominate the members of the Technical Working Group;
- 6 g) Draft, review, comment, and recommend approval of Resolutions, Circulars,
7 Memoranda, and Administrative Orders on VAWC for issuance by the relevant
8 Department(s);
- 9 h) Propose a Costed Implementation Plan, the whole or elements of which, upon
10 Committee approval, shall be inserted into relevant plans and budgets of the
11 department and which shall be funded fully before any other expenditures of
12 gender and development budgets in all levels and instrumentalities of
13 government;
- 14 i) Sustain Public-Private Partnership to assist in the sustainability of human
15 resources of WCPUs;
- 16 j) Submit to the Office of the Secretary of the DOH its annual report on policies,
17 plans, programs, accomplishments, and statistical reports, and narrative
18 description of activities on or before the last working day of February of every
19 year; and
- 20 k) Meet regularly at least once every quarter or as may be requested by the
21 Chairperson or any Committee member, as the need arises.
- 22

23 *Sec. 8. Technical Working Group.* – A Technical Working Group (“TWG”) shall
24 be established to support the Committee by rendering the following services thereto:

- 25 a) Identify and map out health care facilities that need to establish WCPUs, using
26 demographic and population ratio criteria;
- 27 b) Formulate standard protocols and procedures for multidisciplinary care for
28 women and children victims of abuse and violence;
- 29 c) Set the criteria and procedures for certification standards of women and
30 children protection units;
- 31 d) Set minimum competency requirements for training programs that are gender-
32 responsive, which include but shall not be limited to Certification for Women
33 and Child Protection Specialty Training Program;
- 34 e) Monitor and evaluate the efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of the

1 WCPUs;

2 f) Recommend policy reforms and new guidelines anchored on evidence-based
3 interventions and approaches; and

4 g) Perform other functions as may be necessary for the implementation of the
5 revised issuance.
6

7 Sec. 9. *Secretariat* – A Secretariat is hereby organized to assist the Committee
8 and the TWG in executing its activities. The selected staff from the FHO shall act as
9 the Secretariat, whose functions are the following:

10 a) Provide technical and administrative support to the Committee and TWG in all
11 their activities in furtherance of this Act; and

12 b) Facilitate and organize meetings, workshops, symposiums, and other activities
13 as instructed by the Committee and/or TWG.

14 The members of the TWG and the corresponding members of the Secretariat
15 previously appointed by the Committee members shall hold permanent appointments
16 for continuity purposes.
17

18 Sec. 10. *Minimum Requirements for All Hospitals*. – The following are the
19 minimum requirements for all hospitals:

20 a) The Committee is mandated to ensure that all hospital personnel undergo
21 training on the 4Rs of cases of violence against women and children.

22 b) Hospitals without a WCPU must have a women and children's protection
23 coordinator responsible for coordinating the management and referral of all
24 violence against women and children cases in a hospital facility.
25

26 Sec. 11. *Coordination with Government Agencies and Non-Government*
27 *Organizations*. – The Committee shall closely coordinate with the following entities
28 that are involved in WCPU programs for effective implementation of this Act:

29 a) DOH-DPCB;

30 b) DOH-Health Human Resource Development Bureau;

31 c) DOH-Epidemiology Bureau;

32 d) DOH-Information Management Service;

33 e) DOH-Legal Service;

34 f) DOH-Health Promotion Bureau;

- g) DOH-Health Facility Development Bureau;
- h) DOH-Health Facilities and Services Regulatory Bureau;
- i) DOH-Centers for Health Development
- j) Local government units;
- k) The Child Protection Network Foundation, Inc.;
- l) Women Protection Unit of University of the Philippines – Philippine General Hospital;
- m) Council for the Welfare of Children;
- n) Philippine Commission on Women; and
- o) Philippine Health Insurance Corporation.

Sec. 12. *Appropriations.* – The fund needed to initially implement the provisions of this Act must be sourced primarily from the General Appropriations Act. This law shall be in the form of an automatic appropriation that shall be programmed annually, without regard to the budget proposal or approved appropriations of the concerned government agencies and any of their political subdivisions, government-owned and/or controlled corporations.

Sec. 13. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The DOH, in collaboration with the entities mentioned in Section 11 herein, shall promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations, including their respective functions, within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act.

Sec. 14. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder thereof not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

Sec. 15. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, rule or regulation inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

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

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Approved,