

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 3552



Introduced by **Rep. ANGELO MARCOS BARBA**
2nd District, Ilocos Norte

EXPLANATORY NOTE

With the emergence and the reemergence of infectious diseases such as Ebola, SARS, MERS, avian flu, swine flu, chikungunya, and Zika, focus has shifted to health care system capacity. The Covid-19 pandemic further exposed the weaknesses of the country's health system, particularly the isolation and quarantine capabilities of government hospitals.

Isolation and quarantine are considered effective health strategies in times of public health emergencies, but without having the proper facilities, these strategies are proven futile.

This bill seeks to mandate the establishment of isolation and quarantine facilities such as building, wing, or ward in all government hospitals to prevent the spread of contagious and highly contagious diseases or emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases. The establishment of these facilities will strengthen preparedness and response capabilities of government hospitals, especially in times of public health emergencies like the Covid-19 pandemic.

In normal conditions, the said facilities shall be utilized as infectious disease facility or in other instances as may be deemed necessary by the Department of Health (DOH), or upon request by the concerned government hospital.

The proposed measure also seeks to institutionalize the conversion of public buildings into isolation and quarantine facilities to help ease the burden of hospitals and ensure the health and safety of the community during a public health emergency.

In light of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this measure is earnestly sought.

ANGELO MARCOS BARBA

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AN ACT
MANDATING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ISOLATION AND
QUARANTINE FACILITIES IN ALL GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS,
PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Isolation and Quarantine Facilities Act.*”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the declared policy of the State to improve the delivery of health services to the people. To protect people from public health threats, there is a need to establish isolation and quarantine facilities to prevent the spread of contagious and highly contagious diseases.

SECTION 3. *Definition of terms.* –

- a. *Infectious disease or diseases* – is or are caused by pathogenic microorganisms, such as bacteria, viruses, parasites or fungi; the diseases can be spread, directly or indirectly, from one person to another.
- b. *Isolation facility* – a place or space for persons who are ill or infected to prevent its transmission to others.
- c. *Quarantine facility* – a place or space for persons who are not ill but may have been exposed to an infectious agent or contagious disease, with the objective of monitoring their symptom and ensuring early detection of cases.

SECTION 4. *Establishment of Isolation and Quarantine Facilities in Government Hospitals.* – All government hospitals shall establish isolation and quarantine facilities, such as building, wing, or ward, to prevent the spread of contagious diseases or emerging and re-emerging infectious disease, in accordance with international standards and guidelines or recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO).

Isolated individuals shall be confined separately from quarantined individuals.

The isolation and quarantine facilities dedicated to be used during public health emergencies shall have at least 25 beds, respectively; *Provided*, that during normal times, these facilities shall be utilized as infectious disease facility or in other instances as may be deemed necessary by the Department of Health (DOH), or upon request by the concerned government hospital.

SECTION 5. *Conversion of Government-Owned Buildings into Isolation and/or Quarantine Facilities.* – In case of public health emergencies or when public safety requires, government-owned buildings or facilities shall be converted into isolation and/or quarantine facilities to prevent household infection, reduce community spread of the disease, and decongest hospitals.

The conversion of these facilities must comply with the isolation and quarantine standards set by the DOH and the WHO.

SECTION 6. *Lead Agency.* – The DOH, in coordination with the local government units and other relevant government agencies, shall lead the establishment of these facilities.

SECTION 7. *Appropriations.* – The initial amount necessary for the establishment of the isolation and quarantine facilities in government hospitals shall be charged from the Health Facilities Enhancement Program of the DOH. Thereafter, the amount necessary for the establishment and maintenance of these facilities shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within thirty (30) days from approval of this Act, the DOH, in consultation with stakeholders, shall issue the implementing rules and regulations of this Act. This shall include the guidelines on the procedure and proper use of the isolation and quarantine facilities.

SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.* – Any portion or provisions of this Act that is declared unconstitutional shall not have effect of nullifying other portions or provisions hereof as long as such remaining portions can still subsist and be given effect in their entirety.

SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause.* – Any provision of law, decree, order, rule or regulation inconsistent with this Act is hereby repealed and/or modified accordingly.

SECTION 11. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,