

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
1st Regular Session

House Bill No. 4321



Introduced by Representatives ERIC G. YAP and EDVIC G. YAP

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In a Palace briefing in February of 2024, Department of Health (DOH) Secretary Teodoro Herbosa confirmed the shortage of around 190,000 healthcare professionals, across nursing, medicine, pharmacy, laboratory work, and other allied health fields. Its impact is felt most deeply in far-flung and underserved areas where the presence of a single healthcare worker can mean the difference between life and death.

While private higher education institutions produce thousands of medical and allied health graduates annually, the shortage persists. The issue is not purely a matter of quantity, but also of distribution. Most graduates are trained in urban settings, with limited exposure to the realities of barangay health systems or community-level health units. By providing allied health courses within State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) located in underserved areas, this bill ensures that health graduates are better rooted in, and more responsive to, the needs of their local communities, therefore ultimately strengthening the country's primary care system from the ground up.

This bill mandates SUCs to offer medical and allied health programs, such as, but not limited to, Nursing, Medical Technology, Dentistry, and Pharmacy. SUCs are uniquely positioned to serve as health education hubs for students in underserved areas, and to produce professionals more likely to stay and serve in their home regions.

The bill also ensures that the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the DOH provide institutional support through faculty development, infrastructure upgrades and a phased rollout prioritizing areas with the greatest need. By localizing health education and aligning it with community health systems, this measure not only addresses the shortage in health workers but reorients health professional trainings toward a locally responsive healthcare system.

In the spirit of universal care, the passage of this law is earnestly sought.

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HON. ERIC G. YAP

A stylized signature consisting of a large, open loop at the top, followed by a vertical line and a small, intricate flourish at the bottom.

HON. EDVIC G. YAP

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AN ACT
REQUIRING STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES
(SUCS) TO OFFER MEDICAL AND ALLIED HEALTH
COURSES

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 “Health Courses Expansion Act of 2025”.

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them. Towards this end, the State shall ensure access to quality medical and allied health education, especially in underserved areas, by expanding the capacity of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs).

SEC 3. *Offering of Medical and Allied Health Courses.* – SUCs are required to offer degree programs in the following fields:

- a. Bachelor of Science in Nursing;
- b. Bachelor of Science in Medical Technology;
- c. Bachelor of Science in Dentistry;
- d. Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy; and
- e. Other relevant allied health courses.

SEC 4. *Programs* – The Commission on Higher Education (CHED), SUCs, and other concerned agencies shall provide support in the form of faculty development, infrastructure assistance, and academic partnerships, among others. CHED shall also establish recognition programs for SUCs that contribute significantly to the development of the health workforce, especially in underserved regions.

SEC 5. *Implementing Agencies* – SUCs shall coordinate with CHED and the Department of Health (DOH) for the phased implementation of this Act. Priority

shall be given to SUCs located in regions with limited access to medical education. CHED, in coordination with the Civil Service Commission (CSC) where appropriate, shall provide guidelines for compliance, including the qualification standards (QS) for faculty members, laboratory and hospital affiliations, and accreditation requirements.

SEC 6. *Funding.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of CHED and SUCs. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA).

SEC 7. *Separability Clause.* – Should any provision or part of the Act be declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions and parts hereof, insofar as they are separable from the invalid ones, shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC 8. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, proclamations, rules, and regulations, or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SEC 9. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved