

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4637



Introduced by **REP. ROLANDO LEDESMA MACASAET**
SSS-GSIS Pansyonado Partylist

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that *“The State shall provide immediate and adequate care, benefits, and other forms of assistance to war veterans and veterans of military campaigns, their surviving spouses and orphans.”*¹

The Veterans Memorial Medical Center (VMMC), established in 1948, has long served as the primary hospital for Filipino veterans. However, many veterans in Mindanao remain far from specialized care from this institution. The travel to Metro Manila is costly, physically taxing, and risky for elderly patients especially those with complex conditions. Delayed treatment worsens health outcomes and deepens the challenges faced by our veterans and their families, especially those with service-related mental health concerns.

This measure seeks to bridge that gap by establishing **three VMMC Extension Hospitals in Mindanao**, beginning in Zamboanga City, followed by Misamis Oriental and Davao de Oro. Each will be a full-service, 100-bed facility offering modern, veteran-centered care, including cardiovascular surgery, dialysis, geriatrics, pulmonary services, rehabilitation for the wounded, and integrated mental health support.

Our veterans sacrificed their youth and safety for the Republic and it is now our duty to bring them closer to the care they deserve and to honor their service with dignity and compassion.

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


ROLANDO LEDESMA MACASAET
Representative, SSS-GSIS Pansyonado Partylist

¹ Section 7, Article XVI, 1987, Philippine Constitution

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE VETERANS MEMORIAL MEDICAL CENTER
(VMMC) EXTENSION HOSPITALS IN ZAMBOANGA CITY,
MISAMIS ORIENTAL AND DAVAO DE ORO, UNDER THE DIRECT
SUPERVISION AND CONTROL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
NATIONAL DEFENSE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

1 SECTION 1. *Short Title* – This Act shall be known as the “*Veterans*
2 *Memorial Medical Centre (VMMC) Mindanao Extension Hospitals Act of*
3 *2025.*”
4

5 SEC. 2. *Declaration of State Policy and Principle* - It is the policy of the
6 State to provide immediate and adequate care, benefits, and assistance to war
7 veterans and veterans of military campaigns, together with their surviving
8 spouses and orphans, consistent with Article XVI, Section 7 of the 1987
9 Constitution. In furtherance of this policy, the State shall expand the Veterans
10 Memorial Medical Center network to Mindanao in order to ensure geographic
11 equity, timely access to specialized care, and the integration of mental health and
12 wellness services into veteran centered care.
13

14 SEC. 3. *Establishment of VMMC Extension Hospitals in Mindanao* -
15 There are hereby established three Veterans Memorial Medical Center Extension
16 Hospitals, hereinafter referred to as **VMMC Mindanao Extension Hospitals**,
17 located in **Zamboanga City, Misamis Oriental, and the Davao de Oro.**
18

19 Each hospital shall have a **capacity of one hundred (100) beds** and shall
20 operate as an integral part of the VMMC network under the supervision of the
21 **Department of National Defense (DND) through the Philippine Veterans**
22 **Affairs Office (PVAO).**

23
24 **SEC. 4. *Ownership, Governance, and Supervision*** - The VMMC
25 Mindanao Extension Hospitals shall be owned by the Republic of the Philippines
26 and shall be governed, administered, and supervised by the DND through PVAO,
27 in coordination with the Veterans Memorial Medical Center, subject to applicable
28 laws, auditing rules, and civil service requirements.

29
30 **SEC. 5. *Scope of Services and Standards of Care*** - Each VMMC
31 Mindanao Extension Hospital shall be a full service tertiary hospital that
32 provides, at a minimum:

- 33
34 (a) Advanced cardiovascular surgery and cardiac care;
35
36 (b) A comprehensive dialysis center with inpatient and outpatient
37 services;
38
39 (c) A dedicated geriatrics service providing age appropriate,
40 integrated care;
41
42 (d) An enhanced pulmonary center with critical care capability;
43
44 (e) A comprehensive rehabilitation center for those wounded in
45 action and for other service related injuries;
46
47 (f) A Mental Health and Wellness Center offering inpatient and
48 outpatient psychiatry and psychology, trauma informed care for
49 post-traumatic stress, counseling and psychotherapy, substance use
50 assessment and treatment, suicide prevention and crisis response,
51 family and caregiver support, and peer support programs;
52
53 (g) Diagnostic imaging, clinical laboratory, blood services,
54 pharmacy, emergency and disaster response services;
55
56 (h) Patient navigation, social services, telemedicine, discharge
57 planning, and scheduled follow through checkups.
58

59 **SEC. 6. *Eligibility*** - For purposes of this Act:
60

61 (a) **Veteran** refers to a person recognized as such under laws, rules,
62 and regulations administered by PVAO;

63
64 (b) **Immediate dependents** include the lawful spouse, minor
65 children, and other dependents recognized under applicable veterans
66 laws and PVAO regulations.

67
68 **SEC. 7. *Zero Billing and Full Medical Assistance for Veterans*** - The
69 DND through PVAO shall ensure that all eligible veterans enjoy full medical
70 assistance and zero billing for all medical procedures and services, whether
71 inpatient or outpatient, including emergency care, diagnostics, professional fees,
72 operations and procedures, medicines and maintenance medications, medical
73 supplies and devices, rehabilitation services, and follow through check ups. No
74 veteran shall be charged any direct or indirect out of pocket expense for services
75 covered by this section.

76
77 When a required service is temporarily unavailable within the VMMC
78 network, the hospital shall arrange referral and ensure continuity of care in an
79 appropriate government or contracted private facility, without cost to the veteran,
80 subject to guidelines issued under this Act.

81
82 **SEC. 8. *Full Coverage for Immediate Dependents through the***
83 ***Department of Health*** - Immediate dependents of eligible veterans may avail of
84 the same medical care within the VMMC network. The **Department of Health**
85 **(DOH)**, through its **Medical Assistance to Indigent and Financially**
86 **Incapacitated Patients (MAIFIPs)** program, shall **cover one hundred percent**
87 **(100%) of hospital expenses**, including **medicines and required medical**
88 **supplies**, for such immediate dependents, subject to program eligibility rules and
89 to implementing guidelines issued under this Act. The DOH shall ensure timely
90 fund availability and simplified processing to prevent out of pocket payment at
91 the point of care.

92
93 **SEC. 9. *PhilHealth and Other Payors*** - The Philippine Health Insurance
94 Corporation (PhilHealth) shall align benefit packages, case rates, and special
95 programs with the standards of care under this Act. Any reimbursements for
96 veteran services shall accrue to the VMMC network to augment service delivery,
97 provided that such reimbursements shall **not** diminish or substitute the budgetary
98 support necessary to maintain zero billing.

99
100 **SEC. 10. *Human Resources for Health*** - The VMMC network shall create
101 plantilla positions and offer competitive compensation and benefits to recruit and
102 retain qualified medical, nursing, allied health, and support personnel. The DOH

103 may second personnel and provide residency and fellowship training slots, in
104 partnership with accredited institutions, to ensure service readiness and quality.

105
106 **SEC. 11. *Infrastructure, Equipment, and Information Systems*** -
107 Operationalization shall include site selection and acquisition of land,
108 architectural and engineering design, construction of buildings and
109 complementary infrastructure, procurement and installation of medical and
110 information technology equipment, commissioning of services, and allocation for
111 operations and maintenance. Hospital information systems shall support
112 eligibility verification, e-referrals, pharmacy management, and financial
113 protection mechanisms.

114
115 **SEC. 12. *Accessibility and Patient Support*** - The hospitals shall ensure
116 accessibility for elderly and disabled patients, provide transport and lodging
117 assistance where needed, and utilize telemedicine, remote monitoring, and
118 coordinated referrals to reduce travel burdens on veterans and their families.

119
120 **SEC. 13. *Interagency Coordination and Agreements*** - The DND through
121 PVAO, the DOH, the Department of Budget and Management, the Philippine
122 Health Insurance Corporation, and concerned local government units shall enter
123 into memoranda of agreement to implement this Act, including unified eligibility
124 and verification, bed and service surge protocols, procurement coordination, and
125 claims settlement processes that guarantee zero billing for veterans and one
126 hundred percent coverage for immediate dependents.

127
128 **SEC. 14. *Phasing and Timelines*** - The VMMC Mindanao Extension
129 Hospital in **Zamboanga City** shall commence operations within twenty four (24)
130 months from the effectivity of this Act. The facilities in **Misamis Oriental** and
131 in the **Davao de Oro** shall commence operations within thirty six (36) and forty
132 eight (48) months, respectively. The Secretary of National Defense may adjust
133 these timelines for just cause, subject to written notice to Congress stating the
134 reasons and revised milestones.

135
136 **SEC. 15. *Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting*** - The DND through
137 PVAO, in coordination with the DOH, shall submit to Congress an annual report
138 on implementation that includes service utilization, access and timeliness
139 indicators, quality and patient safety metrics, financial performance, mental
140 health service uptake, rehabilitation outcomes for those wounded in action, and
141 compliance with the zero billing policy for veterans and the one hundred percent
142 coverage for immediate dependents.

143
144 **SEC. 16. *Appropriations*** - The amount necessary for the initial
145 implementation of this Act, including land acquisition, construction, equipment,

146 and operating expenses for the first year, shall be charged against current
147 appropriations of the DND and the DOH, subject to augmentation as may be
148 necessary. Thereafter, the sums required for the continued operation of the
149 VMMC Mindanao Extension Hospitals, the zero billing policy for veterans, and
150 the full coverage for immediate dependents through the MAIFIPs program shall
151 be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.
152

153 **SEC. 17. *Implementing Rules and Regulations*** - Within ninety (90) days
154 from the effectivity of this Act, the DND through PVAO and the DOH, in
155 coordination with the DBM, PhilHealth, and concerned stakeholders, shall
156 promulgate the rules and regulations necessary to implement this Act.
157

158 **SEC. 18. *Separability Clause*** - If any provision of this Act is declared
159 unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions shall continue to be in full
160 force and effect.
161

162 **SEC. 19. *Repealing Clause*** - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, and
163 regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified
164 accordingly.
165

166 **SEC. 20. *Effectivity*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
167 publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two newspapers of general
168 circulation.
169

170 *Approved.*