

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5649



Introduced by: Kababaihan Kabalikatan para sa Kapakanan at Kaunlaran ng Bayan (4K) Party-list
Representative Iris Marie D. Montes

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE GERIATRIC CENTER UNDER THE DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to provide highly specialized field of geriatric medical and long-term care to our aging population who have little to no financial means through the establishment of the Philippine Geriatric Center (PGC) under the Department of Health.

It renames and upgrades the existing National Center for Geriatric Health (NCGH) into a tertiary specialty hospital dedicated to the care, treatment, and rehabilitation of the elderly.

As the National Specialty Referral Center for geriatric care, the PGC will provide specialized services, promote geriatric research, facilitate education and training for healthcare providers, and coordinate a national approach to elderly healthcare.

The bill also mandates the creation of a National Geriatric Health Service Delivery Plan and the establishment of regional geriatric centers to ensure nationwide accessibility to services. It further proposes the development of a Geriatric Human Resource Development Program, to build the country's capacity in geriatric care through scholarships, incentives, and professional development.

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported that there are 12.3 million senior citizens in the country. They constitute 11.31% of the country's total population as of May 2020.

The country is projected to transition to an aging population between 2025 to 2030. The increasing number of older people will have implications for their pensions and their overall health.

In 2019, more than half or 55% of our senior citizens have no pension, 23% receive a pension from the private sector, 6% receive a pension from the government, and 16% receive a social pension of only P5002. Furthermore, the Department of Health (DOH) reported geriatric wards' unavailability and a shortage of geriatricians. Hence, a need for accessible and quality health care for

older people to respond to their health and medical conditions, risks, and vulnerabilities.

This measure embodies the State's constitutional duty to promote the right to health and social justice. It responds to the pressing need to build a healthcare system that respects the dignity and well-being of our senior citizens. The Philippine Geriatric Center Act is a step forward in ensuring that no Filipino is left behind in aging with dignity, care, and respect.

In view thereof, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


IRIS MARIE D. MONTES
Kababaihan Kabalikatan para sa Kapakanan
at Kaunlaran ng Bayan (4K) Party-list

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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 "Philippine Geriatric Center Act."

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* — It is hereby declared a policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of the Filipino people and to instill health consciousness among them.

Towards this end, the State shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development. It shall ensure that quality health services are accessible and available to them by establishing a specialized hospital that will cater to their medical and health needs.

SEC. 3. *Philippine Geriatric Center.* - The National Center for Geriatric Health (NCGH), located in San Miguel, Manila, is hereby renamed as the Philippine Geriatric Center (PGC) and established as a tertiary specialty hospital under the direct control and supervision of the Department of Health to ensure the healthcare and quality of life of our older and aging population.

Provided, That the existing hospital development plan, current bed capacity, and service capabilities, including organizational structure and staffing requirements, shall be updated and upgraded consistent with the given mandate under this Act. Provided, further. That the Department of Health (DOH) shall formulate a National Geriatric Health Service Delivery Plan, which shall include the establishment of regional geriatric centers within five (5) years from the effectivity of this Act to ensure equitable access to geriatric care.

SEC. 4. *Purposes and Objectives.* - The PGC shall have the following purposes and objectives:

(a) Equip, maintain, administer, and operate an integrated medical institution which shall specialize in geriatric health services;

(b) Promote medical services to the elderly and scientific research/database relative to the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, care, rehabilitation, and relief of diseases of older people and the aging population;

(c) Establish and maintain a National Geriatric Health Registry, which shall collect and update data on the health status, care needs, and service utilization of the elderly population;

(d) Provide education and training for physicians, nurses, officers, social workers, barangay health workers, and other medical and technical personnel in the practice and scientific implementation of health services to older people and the aging population;

(e) Coordinate the various efforts and activities of other government agencies and local government units for the purpose of achieving a comprehensive and integrated approach to geriatric health and healthcare service delivery;

(f) Develop and implement a Geriatric Human Resource Development Program that will provide scholarships, incentives, and continuing professional development for healthcare workers specializing in geriatrics, in coordination with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC); and

(g) Ensure the integration of geriatric services within the Universal Health Care (UHC) framework, including PhilHealth coverage for age-related conditions, long-term care, and preventive health services.

SEC. 5. *Referral System.* - The PGC shall be the National Specialty Referral Center for all private and government facilities for specialized geriatric care.

SEC. 6. *Appropriations.* - An initial amount of Five Hundred Million Pesos (PhP 500,000,000) shall be appropriated for the upgrading, capacity-building, and initial operations of the PGC.

Provided, That said funding shall be released in phases over a three-year period, subject to periodic performance evaluation and progress reports submitted to Congress. Provided, further. That the Secretary of Health shall immediately include in the Department's program the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the subsequent Annual General Appropriations Act.

Thereafter, the amount necessary for the continued operation of the hospital, including its upgrading and expansion of services, shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 7. *Periodic Review.* - Within five (5) years from the effectivity of this Act, and every five (5) years thereafter, the Department of Health shall conduct a comprehensive review of the implementation of this Act and submit a report to Congress, including recommendations for legislative or policy amendments

SEC. 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - The Department of Health shall, in consultation and coordination with appropriate government agencies

such as the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), Civil Service Commission (CSC), National Commission on Senior Citizens (NCSC), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), and other stakeholders, within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, promulgate the Implementing Rules and Regulations for the effective and efficient implementation of the provisions of this Act.

Sec. 9. Separability Clause. - If any provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other provisions hereof.

Sec. 10. Repealing Clause. — All existing laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

Sec. 11. Effectivity Clause. — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,