



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City
TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



House Bill No. 5740

Introduced by CIBAC Party-List Representative
EDUARDO “BRO. EDDIE” C. VILLANUEVA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is globally recognized for its large and resilient community of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), whose remittances and sacrifices significantly contribute to our country’s economic stability and growth. However, despite their invaluable role, many OFWs and their families continue to face challenges in accessing timely and affordable healthcare—particularly during medical emergencies, repatriation, or pre-departure processes.

To address these long-standing gaps, the “Overseas Filipino Workers Hospital Act,” which has already been passed on Third (3rd) and Final Reading at the House of Representatives last 19th Congress, seeks to institutionalize the Overseas Filipino Workers Hospital (OFWH) as a Level III specialty medical facility dedicated to serving the healthcare needs of OFWs and their qualified dependents.

Under this measure, the OFWH—located in San Fernando City, Pampanga—shall operate under the direct supervision and control of the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) and will be tasked with the following:

- a) Delivering comprehensive and quality health services to both active and inactive OFWs and their families;
- b) Serving as a referral and repatriation facility for distressed and ill OFWs, in coordination with the DOH and relevant foreign posts;
- c) Functioning as a pre-employment and post-employment medical examination center for migrant workers;
- d) Providing telehealth services to OFWs abroad and their families in the Philippines;
- e) Strengthening occupational health surveillance, medical research, and the training of healthcare professionals focused on migrant health; and
- f) Supporting public education campaigns on the prevention and treatment of diseases common among OFWs.

Within five (5) years from the effectivity of this Act, the government is mandated to shall regional OFW Hospitals in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao to cater to the needs of overseas Filipino workers and their dependents who are located in these regions.

The bill likewise empowers the DMW to ensure that the OFWH operates efficiently, sets up a focal office for migrant health, and institutionalizes participation from OFW organizations in policymaking. Meanwhile, the Department of Health (DOH) is mandated to extend technical assistance and support the establishment of OFW wards in DOH-retained hospitals nationwide.

By recognizing the need for specialized, institutionalized healthcare support for our modern-day heroes, this bill aligns with the constitutional guarantee of promoting social justice and protecting labor—especially those who serve the country from beyond our shores.

The swift enactment of this measure into law is a crucial investment in the health, dignity, and well-being of our OFWs and their families.


EDUARDO "BRO. EDDIE" C. VILLANUEVA



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AN ACT
ENHANCING THE MEDICAL ACCESS OF OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS (OFWs) AND THEIR FAMILIES BY STRENGTHENING THE OFW HOSPITAL 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 "*OFW Hospital Act.*"

2
3 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – It is the policy of the State to adopt an
4 integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall endeavor
5 to make essential goods, health, and other social services available to all people at
6 affordable cost. To this end, the State shall protect the interest and promote the well-
7 being of overseas Filipino workers (OFW) through the provision of social welfare
8 services in recognition of their importance and contribution to economic development
9 and nation-building.

10
11 **SEC. 3. Definition of Terms.** - As used in this Act:

12 a) ***Dependents*** shall refer to any of the following:

- 13 1. The legal spouse entitled by law to receive support from the OFW;
14 2. The legitimate, legitimated, legally adopted, or illegitimate child who is
15 unmarried, not gainfully employed, and has not reached twenty-one (21)
16 years of age, or if over twenty-one (21) years of age, is congenitally
17 incapacitated or while still a minor has been permanently incapacitated
18 and incapable of self-support, physically or mentally; or
19 3. The parents who are receiving regular support from the OFW;

20
21 b) ***Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) or Migrant Worker*** refers to a Filipino who
22 has been engaged, is engaged, or is to be engaged in a remunerated activity
23 in a country of which the said person is not an immigrant citizen, or a permanent
24 resident of, or is not awaiting naturalization, recognition, or admission, whether
25 land-based or sea-based regardless of status; excluding a Filipino engaged

1 under a government-recognized exchange visitor program for cultural and
2 educational purposes. For purposes of this Act, a person engaged in
3 remunerated activity covers a person who has been contracted for overseas
4 employment but has yet to leave the Philippines, regardless of status, and
5 includes "Overseas Contract Workers."
6

7 **SEC. 4. OFW Hospital and Diagnostic Center.** – The "Overseas Filipino
8 Worker Hospital and Diagnostic Center" or OFW Hospital, established in the city of
9 San Fernando, province of Pampanga, shall primarily cater to OFWs and their
10 dependents. It shall be a government instrumentality with corporate powers, managed
11 and supervised by a Board of Trustees chaired by the Secretary of the Department of
12 Migrant Workers (DMW), being the primary national agency with the mandate of
13 ensuring the welfare of the OFWs and their dependents: *Provided*, That nothing herein
14 shall prevent the OFW Hospital from accommodating patients other than OFWs or
15 their qualified dependents.
16

17 **SEC. 5. Regional Hospitals.** – Within five (5) years from the effectivity of this
18 Act, the DMW, in coordination with the Department of Health (DOH) and other relevant
19 agencies, and in accordance with appropriate health facility development and health
20 human resource plans, shall establish regional hospitals in Luzon, Visayas and
21 Mindanao to cater to the needs of overseas Filipino workers and their dependents who
22 are located in these regions.
23

24 **SEC. 6. Purposes and Objectives.** - The OFWH shall:

- 25 a) Establish, operate, and maintain medical facilities, including a medical and
26 diagnostic center to provide comprehensive and people-centered health care
27 services to OFWs and their qualified dependents and the general public;
- 28 b) Serve as a referral facility for repatriated OFWs needing medical assistance
29 and support while ensuring its participation in the provincial and inter-regional
30 health care provider networks to allow for a seamless and coordinated referral
31 system for the medical repatriation program, in accordance with Republic Act
32 No. 11223 or the "Universal Health Care Act;"
- 33 c) Promote, encourage, engage in, and publish scientific research on the
34 prevention, care, and treatment of occupational diseases common to OFWs,
35 including the underwriting of research on biological, demographic, social,
36 economic, eugenics, physiological aspects of occupational disorders of OFWs,
37 and conduct relevant congresses, conventions, seminars, and conferences;
- 38 d) Develop training programs for medical and allied medical professionals which
39 shall focus on strengthening occupational and migrant health services in the
40 country and the creation of specialized services;
- 41 e) Provide telehealth services to migrant workers and their dependents for follow
42 up consultations, and assist in the medical assessment and management of
43 distressed OFWs while awaiting repatriation, which may be extended at
44 Philippine foreign posts or migrant workers offices;
- 45 f) Conduct pre-employment medical examinations of OFW applicants, subject to
46 pertinent rules and regulations;
- 47 g) Strengthen health surveillance through the provision of a post-employment or
48 post-arrival medical examination for OFWs, in consonance with Republic Act
49 No. 8042 or the "Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995" as
50 amended, and the Philippine Migrant Health Program of the DOH;

- 1 h) Raise public awareness and conduct a massive information drive on the
2 prevention, treatment, and control of diseases common to OFWs, occupational
3 health and safety, and physical fitness; and
4 i) Assist and support universities, research institutions, and other hospitals or
5 medical facilities in their studies on health-related concerns of OFWs.
6

7 **SEC. 7. Powers of the OFWH.** - The OFWH shall have the power to:

- 8 a) Acquire and hold, in any manner, property of whatever nature or description,
9 and to dispose of such property under any mode of encumbrance or
10 conveyance;
11 b) Contract and be contracted with;
12 c) Levy, assess and collect such fees, charges, and assessments as may be
13 necessary or proper to support, finance, and maintain its operation;
14 d) Mortgage, lease, sell, transfer, convey, or otherwise dispose of its properties;
15 e) Invest in, and purchase or otherwise acquire, own, hold, use, lease grant,
16 mortgage, sell, transfer or otherwise deal with, real and/or personal properties
17 of every kind and nature, including shares of stock, bonds, notes and other
18 evidence of indebtedness or obligations of other corporations whether
19 government or private;
20 f) Solicit and receive donations, endowments, and funds in the form of
21 contributions, whether in cash or in kind, from both the public and private
22 sectors subject to existing budgeting, accounting, and auditing rules and
23 regulations;
24 g) Open such accounts in banks and other financial institutions, and to disburse
25 such funds or invest the same as the DMW Secretary may direct to accomplish
26 or advance the purposes or interest of the hospital;
27 h) Invite foreign specialists and similar experts in the various medical fields not
28 available in the country; to train the personnel, trainees, and residents;
29 i) Send the personnel to research institutes, medical institutes, or universities for
30 advance training or observation and to attend international or regional
31 conventions, conferences, congresses, and seminars as the Medical Center
32 Chief may deem necessary to accomplish the purposes and objectives of the
33 hospital and subject to the approval of the DMW Secretary; and
34 j) Exercise such other powers and functions as may be necessary or incidental
35 for the accomplishment of the purposes and objectives of the OFWH.
36

37 **SEC. 8. Creation of the OFW Hospital Board of Trustees.** – There is hereby
38 created an OFW Hospital Trust, for the benefit of OFWs, to be administered by a Board
39 of Trustees, composed of seven (7) members. Three (3) members of the Board shall
40 constitute a quorum to transact business and any decision of the three (3) members 2
41 on any matter shall constitute a valid and binding act of the OFW Hospital.
42

43 The Composition of the OFW Hospital Board shall be as follows:

- 44 a) Chairperson: Secretary of the DMW;
45 b) Vice-Chairperson: Secretary of the DOH; and
46 c) Members:
47 (1) Secretary, Department of Labor & Employment (DOLE);
48 (2) Administrator, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA);
49 (3) Secretary, Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD);
50 (4) Land-based OFWs Representative; and

1 (5) Sea-based OFWs Representative.

2
3 The representatives of land-based and sea-based OFWs shall be appointed by
4 the President of the Philippines from a list of nominees of their OFW organizations,
5 duly endorsed by the Secretary of the DMW to the President. The nominees shall at
6 least be forty (40) years of age, and an OFW with at least five (5) years of work
7 experience abroad at the time of their nomination.
8

9 The members of the Board may elect an alternate, whose name shall be 18
10 submitted to the President for appointment. In case of vacancy, the head of the agency
11 or the OFW organizations may nominate an alternate, subject to the official
12 appointment by the President of the Philippines.
13

14 **SEC. 9. Powers and Functions of the OFW Hospital Board of Trustees.**

15 The Board of Trustees shall have the following powers and functions:

- 16 a) Approve and promulgate policies, guidelines, programs, and plans for the
17 sound administration, maintenance, and operations of the OFW Hospital for the
18 implementation of the purposes and objectives of this Act;
19 b) Approve the organizational structure and staffing pattern of the OFW Hospital
20 in accordance with the revised compensation and position classification system
21 subject to the evaluation and approval of the Department of Budget and
22 Management (DBM) and in compliance with civil service and other pertinent
23 laws, rules, and regulations;
24 c) Appoint, remove, suspend, or otherwise discipline the officers of the OFW
25 Hospital occupying executive and senior management positions, subject to civil
26 service and other applicable laws, rules, and regulations;
27 d) Adopt the annual and supplemental budget of the OFW Hospital; and
28 e) Exercise all the general powers necessary or proper for the attainment of the
29 purpose and objectives of this Act.
30

31 **SEC. 10. Medical Center Chief.** - The Medical Center Chief shall be appointed
32 by the President of the Philippines upon the recommendation of the DMW Secretary.
33

34 The Medical Center Chief shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

- 35
36 a) Provide overall direction and strategic leadership to the OFWH toward the
37 provision of high-quality health services;
38 b) Oversee all managerial and administrative processes and operations of all
39 departments of the OFWH;
40 c) Supervise daily activities of functional units;
41 d) Ensure high standards in clinical training for medical and allied medical
42 personnel;
43 e) Execute, on behalf of the hospital, all contracts and agreements which the
44 hospital may enter into and accomplish and deliver any and all documents
45 relative to such contracts and agreements, subject to the approval of the DMW
46 Secretary;
47 f) Represent the hospital in all dealing with other offices, agencies, and
48 instrumentalities of the Government and all other persons or entities, whether
49 domestic or foreign and whether government or private;

- 1 g) Submit, for the consideration and approval of the Board, the proposed
2 development plans, programs, measures, policies, and guidelines necessary
3 for the effective implementation of the purposes and objectives of this Act;
4 h) Appoint, promote, transfer, remove, suspend or otherwise discipline the officers
5 27 and employees of the OFW Hospital, except those appointed by the Board;
6 and
7 i) Exercise such other powers and perform such duties as may be vested or
8 reposed by the DMW Secretary.
9

10 **SEC. 11. Duties and Responsibilities of the DMW and OWAA.** – The DMW
11 shall:
12

- 13 a) Establish a focal office for migration and health in the DMW to ensure that the
14 country's migrant health program is mainstreamed in the plans and programs
15 of the OFWH which shall include:
16 1) Assistance in identifying, documenting, processing, and approving
17 applications for benefits granted to OFWs and their qualified
18 dependents;
19 2) Establishment of a referral system within the OFWH to ensure efficient
20 delivery of medical and health care services to OFWs and their qualified
21 dependents;
22 3) Strengthening of the existing health benefits and medical assistance
23 programs such as subsidies on hospitalization and medical procedures
24 for OFWs and their qualified dependents, subject to the availability of
25 funds and resources; and
26 4) Active engagement in the Philippine Migrant Health Network, an inter-
27 agency, multi-stakeholder network for migrant health, composed of
28 members from other government, non-governmental agencies, academe,
29 civil society organizations, private sector, and international
30 organizations, to advocate and lobby support for migrant health
31 programs:
32 b) Create a consultative committee and other necessary mechanisms for the
33 effective participation of land-based and sea-based accredited OFW
34 organizations in the formulation of policies for the effective implementation of
35 programs and measures to attain the objectives of the OFWH; and
36 c) Perform such other functions that are necessary for the attainment of the
37 purposes and objectives of this Act.
38

39 The OWWA shall also ensure that existing health benefits and medical
40 assistance programs for OFWs and their qualified dependents are strengthened:
41 *Provided, That* nothing in this Act shall be construed to diminish or reduce the existing
42 benefits of OFWs and their dependents provided under R.A. No. 11223.
43

44 **SEC. 12. Duties and Responsibilities of the DOH.** - The DOH shall have the
45 following duties and responsibilities in the implementation of the purposes and
46 objectives of this Act:

- 47 a) Ensure that the necessary permits and licenses to operate the OFW Hospital
48 are obtained, consistent with relevant issuances, rules, and regulations;
49 b) Endorse and encourage medical specialists in other government hospitals such
50 as the Philippine Heart Center, National Kidney and Transplant Institute, Lung

- 1 Center of the Philippines, National Children's Hospital, and the Philippine
2 General Hospital, to hold clinics in the OFW Hospital;
3 c) Support the OFW Hospital through the provision of technical assistance,
4 extending capital outlay, and monitoring the hospital's compliance with
5 standards to deliver quality healthcare; and
6 d) Perform such other functions that are necessary for the attainment of the 14
7 purposes and objectives of this Act.
8

9 **SEC. 13. Support from other Government Agencies.** – All other agencies,
10 departments, bureaus, offices, or instrumentalities of the government, including
11 government-owned or -controlled corporations, shall render assistance to the OF WH
12 for the effective implementation of this Act.
13

14 **SEC. 14. Tax Exemption.** – All grants, bequests, endowments, donations, and
15 contributions made to the OFW Hospital to be used actually, directly, and exclusively
16 by the OFW Hospital shall be exempt from donor's tax and the same shall be
17 considered as allowable deduction from the gross income of the donor, in accordance
18 with the provisions of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended. The
19 importation of equipment, machinery, and spare parts used actually, directly, and
20 exclusively for the operation of the OFW Hospital and are not available locally shall be
21 exempt from value-added tax and customs duty.
22

23 **SEC. 15. Funding for the OFW Hospital.** – The amount necessary for the
24 initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's
25 appropriation of the concerned departments and agencies. Thereafter, such amount
26 shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.
27

28 **SEC. 16. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** - Within sixty (60) days from
29 the approval of this Act, the DMW shall, in consultation with the DOH, OWWA, and
30 other stakeholders, promulgate the rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of
31 this Act.
32

33 **SEC. 17. Separability Clause.** - If any provision of this Act is declared invalid
34 or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be
35 in full force and effect.
36

37 **SEC. 18. Repealing Clause.** - Executive Order No. 154, Series of 2021, is
38 hereby repealed. All other laws, decrees, executive orders, and rules and regulations
39 contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or
40 modified accordingly.
41

42 **SEC. 19. Effectivity.** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
43 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.
44

45 *Approved,*