

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5911



Introduced by Hon. Florabel Co Yatco

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The nursing profession serves as the backbone of the Philippine health care system. Nurses are not only frontliners in hospitals and health facilities but also play critical roles in public health, community outreach, health education, and emergency response. Despite their indispensable contribution to the nation's health system, nurses in the Philippines continue to face systemic challenges, including poor working conditions, inadequate compensation, limited career advancement, and the lack of comprehensive support for their professional development and well-being.

Republic Act No. 9173, or the "Philippine Nursing Act of 2002," while groundbreaking at the time of its passage, is now outdated and no longer responsive to the evolving needs and realities of Filipino nurses, both in the public and private sectors, and within the context of national and global health challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed the vulnerabilities in the current framework, particularly the insufficient institutional support for nurses, their mental health, protection, and fair compensation.

This bill seeks to enact the Comprehensive National Nursing Development and Welfare Act of 2025, which aims to repeal and replace R.A. No. 9173. It provides an updated and holistic framework to enhance the professional practice, development, and welfare of nurses across all health care settings in the country. The measure includes provisions that:

1. Strengthen the regulatory framework for nursing education, licensure, and practice to align with global standards and local health care needs;
2. Ensure decent, equitable, and regionally competitive compensation and benefits for nurses in both public and private institutions;
3. Institutionalize continuing professional development and specialization programs, including state-supported scholarships and training;
4. Protect and promote nurses' rights to a safe and healthy working environment, with emphasis on mental health, occupational safety, and protection from discrimination or abuse; and
5. Establish support mechanisms for nurses deployed in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDAs) and other high-risk environments;

This proposed measure is a vital step toward honoring the service and sacrifice of Filipino nurses by ensuring they are protected, empowered, and given the opportunities to grow professionally and personally within the country.

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


HON. FLORABEL CO YATCO
Representative
Nanay Partylist

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
H.B. No. 5911

Introduced by Hon. Florabel Co Yatco

An Act Establishing the Comprehensive National Nursing Development and Welfare Act of 2025, Repealing Republic Act No. 9173, and Providing Funds Therefor

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 “Comprehensive National Nursing Welfare and Development Act of 2025”.

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy.- The State recognizes the indispensable role of Filipino nurses in achieving a resilient, inclusive, and responsive health system. It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and promote the rights and welfare of nurses by providing a supportive environment for professional growth, ensuring just and equitable compensation, upholding standards of practice, and investing in nursing as a strategic component of the national health care system.

SECTION 3. Objectives.

This Act seeks to:

- a) Establish a modern and responsive legal framework for the nursing profession;
- b) Ensure nurses’ equitable compensation, benefits, and protection in all settings;
- c) Promote continuing professional education, specialization, and training opportunities;
- d) Address nursing workforce issues including shortages, maldistribution, and migration;
- e) Strengthen regulation and ethical practice in the nursing profession;
- f) Develop and implement a national nursing workforce plan; and

SECTION 4. Definition of Terms.- As used in this Act:

- a. *Nurse* - refers to a person duly licensed to practice nursing in the Philippines under RA 9173 and this Act;
- b. *Nurse Health Officer (NHO)* - a designated officer in healthcare institutions responsible for coordinating the implementation of benefits under this Act;
- c. *Chief Nursing Officer (CNO)* - the highest-ranking nurse in an institution or DOH-assigned hospital tasked with policy and program oversight;
- d. *NHRHMS* - Nursing Human Resource for Health Management System, a national framework under DOH and PRC for workforce planning; and
- e. *Entry-Level Nurse* - newly hired registered nurse without prior local or international clinical experience.

SECTION 5. Minimum Standards and Compensation.- Subject to the Salary Standardization of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), these shall be the prescribed salaries under this Act:

- a. All entry-level nurses employed in national government hospitals shall receive a salary not lower than Salary Grade 15 (SG-15). Nurses in local government units (LGUs) and private institutions shall be encouraged to adopt similar minimum standards.
- b. LGUs that meet 5th class income status or lower shall be provided a subsidy through the Local Government Support Fund (LGSF) to comply with minimum compensation.
- c. Private hospitals with less than 100-bed capacity may apply for Department of Health (DOH) transitional wage assistance for a maximum of (3) three years.
- d. All nurses, regardless of rank, shall be entitled to performance-based incentive pay, night shift differentials, hazard pay, and overtime pay in accordance with Civil Service Commission (CSC) and Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) regulations.

SECTION 6. Flexible Work Arrangements. Subject to institutional capacity and service delivery needs, nurses may choose flexible work arrangements, including:

- a. Standard 8-hour shifts;
- b. Optional 12-hour shifts, capped at 48 hours per week with adequate rest periods;
- c. Rotation schedules shall not exceed 3 consecutive night shifts and shall provide at least 36 hours of rest after night duty blocks.

SECTION 7. Housing and Insurance Benefits.- Government-employed nurses assigned outside their home LGU shall be entitled to temporary accommodation and transport assistance under the DOH Nurse Deployment Program or applicable agency policies. Nurses with at least five (5) years of continuous service in one (1) government institution shall be eligible for permanent housing assistance under the National Housing Authority (NHA), Pag-IBIG Fund, or Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) low-cost housing programs. All nurses shall be entitled to PhilHealth coverage, and government-employed nurses shall be provided additional group health insurance coverage through the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) or equivalent.

Private sector nurses shall be covered under equivalent SSS and PhilHealth benefits, and may be eligible for matching private group insurance plans.

SECTION 8. Health Insurance and Protection Benefits.- All public sector nurses shall be automatically enrolled in the following government-mandated insurance programs:

- a. PhilHealth, under the National Health Insurance Program (RA 11223);
- b. Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), including life and survivorship insurance;
- c. Employees Compensation Commission (ECC) benefits under PD 626;
- d. Mental health and counseling services, in accordance with RA 11036 or the Mental Health Act.

Further, there shall be a mandatory Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) Coverage for Nurses. All government health facilities employing nurses must provide access to a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) Plan, with the following minimum coverage:

- a. Annual maximum benefit of not less than ₱100,000 per nurse;
- b. Access to accredited hospitals, specialist consultations, diagnostics, and emergency care; and
- c. 24/7 telemedicine access where available.

Funding shall be sourced from the facility's Medical Assistance Fund, the Gender and Development (GAD) Fund, or as appropriated under the General Appropriations Act.

Furthermore, there shall be an optional HMO Subsidy for Private Facilities. Private hospitals or clinics that extend similar HMO coverage to their nurses shall be eligible for tax deductions or credits under the Department of Labor and Employment- Department of Finance (DOLE-DOF) guidelines, subject to validation by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR).

HMO and PhilHealth coverage for dependents shall follow the current definitions under Republic Act No. 7875, as amended, and PhilHealth Circulars, specifically:

a. For PhilHealth & Government-Provided HMO:

- a.1. Legal spouse who is not a member or beneficiary of another health program;
- a.2. Children (legitimate, illegitimate, adopted) below 21 years old, unmarried, and unemployed;
- a.3. Children 21 years and above who are mentally or physically incapacitated as certified by a government physician;
- a.4. Parents who are 60 years or older, not enrolled in any other PhilHealth membership category, and wholly dependent on the nurse for support.

For Government-Funded HMO, DOH and GSIS shall create a cost-sharing mechanism to extend HMO access to one (1) qualified dependent, with prioritization of minors or senior citizen parents, subject to budget availability.

The Nurse Welfare Officer (NWO) in each DOH/LGU facility shall ensure that enrolled nurses receive their insurance cards, updated policy schedules, and orientation on how to avail of benefits. The National Nursing Welfare Council (NNWC) shall conduct an annual audit of HMO implementation, utilization, and benefit delivery, with findings submitted to Congress and the Office of the President

SECTION 9. Professional Growth and Regulation.- A career progression framework shall be institutionalized by the Department of Health (DOH), Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), and Civil Service Commission (CSC) to allow advancement into senior clinical, managerial, educator, or specialist nursing positions.

The PRC Board of Nursing shall implement continuing professional development (CPD) programs aligned with DOH priority health programs, and nurses shall be granted service credits and travel support to attend such training.

SECTION 10. Nursing Human Resource for Health Management System (NHRHMS).- The DOH, in coordination with the PRC and DBM, shall implement the NHRHMS to regularly assess supply and demand of nurses at national, regional, provincial, and municipal levels; recommend hiring quotas, deployment priorities, and scholarship programs to DOH; and maintain a real-time registry of active nurses per province and their deployment history.

SECTION 11. Oversight and Implementation.- The Chief Nursing Officer (CNO), Nursing Health Officer (NHO), and Supervising Administrative Officer shall compose the oversight committee in all DOH hospitals, LGU facilities, and private hospitals with 100-bed capacity or more to monitor compliance with this Act.

SECTION 12. Implementing Rules and Regulations.- Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of the Department of Health, in coordination with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Department of Budget and Management (DBM), Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), Association of Health Maintenance Organizations of the Philippines, Inc. (AHMOPI), and Civil Service Commission (CSC), local government units (LGUs), other relevant agencies and stakeholders, shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 13. Separability Clause.- If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 14. Repealing Clause.- All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, and other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act are repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,