

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **6483**



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

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution guarantees the right of every Filipino to health and directs the State to make essential health services available and affordable to all. In line with this mandate, Republic Act No. 11223, or the Universal Health Care Act, was passed in 2019 to give every Filipino access to quality and affordable health care without fear of financial burden.

However, more than five years since its passage, many Filipinos continue to face difficulties in availing themselves of the benefits promised under the law. The cost of treatment remains high, access to health facilities is uneven, and the system for financing and delivering services is still fragmented. The COVID-19 pandemic further revealed gaps in the law, especially in terms of public health preparedness and accountability in the use of funds.

This bill seeks to address these gaps by amending the Universal Health Care Act. It introduces fairer rules on premium contributions and ensures that migrant workers, overseas Filipinos in distress, and dual citizens can still access health benefits. It also puts stronger safeguards on the use of PhilHealth funds, allows local governments to establish their own Special Health Funds to improve local health services, and creates a Universal Health Care Coordinating Council to ensure better coordination among agencies. The bill also strengthens accountability by requiring independent audits of PhilHealth and imposing penalties on officials who misuse health funds.

With these amendments, the measure aims to make universal health care more responsive and sustainable. It ensures that health coverage is truly felt by every Filipino, especially the poor and the vulnerable, while preparing the system to respond better to future health emergencies.

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



HON. ERIC G. YAP



HON. EDVIC G. YAP

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AN ACT
STRENGTHENING THE PHILIPPINE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM TO ACHIEVE
EFFICIENCY AND EQUITY, AND TO IMPROVE PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11223,
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE “UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE ACT”

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

Section 1. Section 4 of Republic Act No. 11223, otherwise known as the “*Universal Health Care Act*”, is hereby amended to read as follows:

“SEC 4. *Definition of Terms.* — As used in this Act:

“x x x

(d) **BENEFIT-RISK ASSESSMENT OR EVALUATION REFERS TO A METHOD OF EVALUATING THE USEFULNESS OF A DRUG FOR SPECIFIC INDICATION, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE BENEFITS AND RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH THAT DRUG UNDER NORMAL CONDITIONS OF USE;**

(e) *Co-insurance* — x x x;

(f) *Co-payment* — x x x;

(g) **DEPENDENTS OF A MEMBER REFER TO:**

(1) THE LEGITIMATE SPOUSE WHO IS NOT A MEMBER;

(2) THE TWENTY-THREE (23) YEARS OF AGE AND BELOW WHO ARE UNMARRIED AND UNEMPLOYED, LEGITIMATE, LEGITIMATED, ILLEGITIMATE, ACKNOWLEDGED CHILDREN AS

**APPEARING IN THE BIRTH CERTIFICATE, LEGALLY
ADOPTED, OR STEPCHILDREN, OR CHILDREN OF
SOLO AND FOSTER PARENTS;**

[(g)] **(H)** *Direct contributors* – x x x;

[(h)] **(I)** *Emergency* – xxx;

[(i)] **(J)** *Entitlement* – xxx;

[(j)] **(K)** *EQUITY* REFERS TO THE FAIR AND JUST OPPORTUNITY TO BE AS HEALTHY AS POSSIBLE. IT ALSO REFERS TO REDUCING AND ULTIMATELY ELIMINATING DISPARITIES IN HEALTH AND IN THE DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH THAT ADVERSELY AFFECT EXCLUDED OR MARGINALIZED GROUPS;

[(k)] **(L)** *Essential health benefit package* refers to a set of individual-based entitlements covered by the National Health Insurance Program (NHIP) which includes primary care; medicines, diagnostics and laboratory; and preventive, curative, ~~{and}~~ rehabilitative services; **AND DENTAL SERVICES;**

[(l)] **(M)** *Fraudulent act* – xxx;

[(m)] **(N)** *Health care provider* – xxx;

[(n)] **(O)** *Health care provider network* – xxx;

[(o)] **(P)** *Health Maintenance Organization (HMO)* – xxx;

[(p)] **(Q)** *Health Technology Assessment (HTA)* refers to the systematic evaluation of properties, effects, or impact of health ~~{related}~~ technologies ~~{, devices, medicines, vaccines, procedures and all other health related systems developed to solve a health problem and improve quality of lives and health outcomes,}~~ utilizing a multidisciplinary process to evaluate ~~{the}~~ ITS CLINICAL, social, economic, ~~{organizational}~~ LEGAL, ~~{and}~~ ethical, AND COMPATIBILITY TO HEALTH SYSTEM issues ~~{of a health intervention or health technology}~~ TO INFORM POLICY-DECISION MAKING, ESPECIALLY ON HOW TO BEST ALLOCATE LIMITED FUNDS TO HEALTH INTERVENTIONS AND TECHNOLOGIES;

[(q)] **(R)** *Indirect contributors* – xxx;

(S) *Individual-based health services* - xxx;

[(r)] (T) MIGRANT WORKERS AND OVERSEAS FILIPINOS IN DISTRESS REFER TO OVERSEAS FILIPINOS WHO HAVE MEDICAL, PSYCHO-SOCIAL, OR LEGAL PROBLEMS REQUIRING TREATMENT, HOSPITALIZATION, COUNSELING, LEGAL REPRESENTATION, OR ANY OTHER KIND OF INTERVENTION BY THE AUTHORITIES IN THE COUNTRY WHERE THEY ARE FOUND;

[(s)] (U) *Population-based health services* – xxx;

[(t)] (V) *Primary care* – xxx;

[(u)] (W) *Primary care provider* – xxx;

(X) *Private health insurance* refers to coverage of a defined set of health services financed through private payments in the form of a premium to the insurer; [and]

(Y) *REAL-WORLD EVIDENCE* REFERS TO CLINICAL EVIDENCE ON A MEDICAL PRODUCT'S SAFETY AND EFFICACY THAT IS GENERATED USING SEVERAL SOURCES OF DATA, INCLUDING ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS, REGISTRIES, CLAIMS/BILLING DATA, AND PATIENT-GENERATED DATA INCLUDING THOSE FROM MOBILE HEALTH APPLICATIONS AND WEARABLE DEVICES; AND

[(v)] (Z) *Unethical act.* – xxx."

SEC 2. Section 6(b) of Republic Act No. 11223 is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 6. *Service Coverage.* – x x x

(b) Within two (2) years from the effectivity of this Act, THE PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION (PhilHealth) shall implement a comprehensive outpatient benefit, including outpatient drug benefit and emergency medical services in accordance with the recommendations of the Health Technology Council (HTAC) created under Section hereof;

"x x x"

SEC 3. Section 9 of Republic Act No. 11223 is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 9. *Entitlement to Benefits.* – x x x

PhilHealth shall provide additional Program benefits for direct contributors, where applicable: *Provided*, That failure to pay premiums shall not prevent the enjoyment of any Program benefits: *Provided, further*, That employers and self-employed direct contributors shall be required to pay all missed contributions with an interest, compounded monthly, of at least three percent (3%) for employers, and not exceeding one and a one-half percent (1.5%) **SIMPLE INTEREST MONTHLY** for self-earning, professional practitioners, and migrant workers.”

SEC. 4. Section 10 of Republic Act No. 11223 is hereby amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 10. *Premium Contributions.* — For direct contributors, premium rates shall be in accordance with the following schedule, and monthly income floor and ceiling:

“x x x

PREMIUM CONTRIBUTIONS FOR DIRECT AND INDIRECT CONTRIBUTIONS SHALL BE DERIVED FROM ACTUARIALLY-ADJUSTED RATES, CONSIDERING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE PROJECTED HEALTHCARE UTILIZATION, COST TRENDS, AND DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC FACTORS. FOR THIS PURPOSE, AN ANNUAL ACTUARIAL REPORT SHALL BE CONDUCTED BY PHILHEALTH AND SUBMITTED TO CONGRESS: PROVIDED, THAT A NON-GOVERNMENT, IMPARTIAL, AND CREDIBLE INDEPENDENT BODY TO BE DETERMINED BY THE UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE COORDINATING COUNCIL (UHC-CC), ESTABLISHED UNDER SECTION 10 OF THIS ACT SHALL REVIEW THE ANNUAL ACTUARIAL REPORT PRIOR TO ITS SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS TO ENSURE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCURACY IN THE FINDINGS.

THE ACTUARIALLY-ADJUSTED PREMIUM RATES, AS DETERMINED BY THE ANNUAL ACTUARIAL REVIEW, SHALL BE SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF CONGRESS, AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE BUDGET PROCESS: PROVIDED, THAT THE PREMIUM RATE SHALL BE SET AT THREE AND ONE-HALF PERCENT (3.5%), AND THE PREMIUM FLOOR AND PREMIUM CEILING SHALL REMAIN THE SAME UNTIL THE ACTUARIAL REVIEW HAS BEEN SUBMITTED AND APPROVED BY CONGRESS, PRIMARILY FOR BENEFITS EXPANSION AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY CONSIDERATIONS: PROVIDED, FURTHER, THAT UPON LEGISLATIVE APPROVAL, ADJUSTMENTS TO PREMIUM RATES SHALL BE IMPLEMENTED AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE FOLLOWING FISCAL YEAR.

FOR MIGRANT WORKERS, PREMIUM CONTRIBUTIONS SHALL BE BASED ON THE INCOME FLOOR: PROVIDED, THAT FIFTY

PERCENT (50%) OF THE PREMIUM CONTRIBUTION OF MIGRANT WORKERS SHALL BE SHOULDERED BY THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT : *PROVIDED, FURTHER*, THAT EMPLOYERS OF SEAFARERS, THROUGH THE LOCAL MANNING AGENCIES, SHALL CONTINUE TO SHOULDER FIFTY PERCENT (50%) OF THE PREMIUM CONTRIBUTION OF THE SEAFARERS: *PROVIDED, FURTHERMORE*, THAT EMPLOYERS OF LAND-BASED MIGRANT WORKERS SHALL SHOULDER FIFTY PERCENT (50%) OF THE PREMIUM CONTRIBUTION OF SAID MIGRANT WORKERS: *PROVIDED, FURTHERMORE*, THAT UNPAID PREMIUM CONTRIBUTIONS OF MIGRANT WORKERS AND OVERSEAS FILIPINOS IN DISTRESS UNDER REPUBLIC ACT (RA) NO. 8042, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE “MIGRANT WORKERS AND OVERSEAS FILIPINOS ACT OF 1995”, AS AMENDED BY RA NO. 10022, SHALL NOT BE COLLECTED UPON THEIR ARRIVAL IN THE COUNTRY: *PROVIDED FINALLY*, THAT FAILURE TO PAY PHILHEALTH CONTRIBUTIONS SHALL NOT BE A GROUND FOR THE NON-ISSUANCE OF AN OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT CERTIFICATE OF A MIGRANT WORKER.

FILIPINOS WITH DUAL CITIZENSHIP (FDC), OR THOSE WHO HAVE RETAINED AND RE-ACQUIRED FILIPINO CITIZENSHIP BY VIRTUE OF RA NO. 9225, OR THE “CITIZENSHIP RETENTION AND RE-ACQUISITION ACT OF 2003”, MAY ENJOY THE BENEFITS PROVIDED BY THE STATE HEALTH INSURER: *PROVIDED*, THAT FAILURE TO PAY PREMIUMS SHALL NOT PREVENT THE FDC AND THEIR LEGAL DEPENDENTS FROM ENJOYING PROGRAM BENEFIT.

[*Provided*, That] For indirect contributors, premium subsidy shall be gradually adjusted and included annually in the General Appropriations Act (GAA): *Provided*, [*further*] That the funds shall be released to PhilHealth: *Provided*, *further*[*more*], That the DOH, in coordination with PhilHealth, may request Congress to appropriate supplemental funding to meet targeted milestones of this Act: *Provided*, [*finally*] **FURTHERMORE**, That for every increase in the rate of contribution of direct contributors and premium subsidy of indirect contributors, PhilHealth shall provide for a corresponding increase in benefits: **PROVIDED, FINALLY, THAT ANY UNUSED PORTION OF THE PREMIUM SUBSIDY OF INDIRECT CONTRIBUTORS SHALL BE USED EXCLUSIVELY FOR AN INCREASE IN BENEFITS OR DECREASE IN FORTHCOMING PREMIUM SUBSIDIES, THE PROVISIONS OF EXISTING LAWS TO THE CONTRARY NOTWITHSTANDING.**”

SEC. 5. Section 11 of Republic Act No. 11223 is hereby amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 11. *Program Reserve Funds*. — PhilHealth shall set aside a portion of its accumulated revenues **AS MENTIONED IN SECTION 37 OF THIS ACT AND ANY OTHER INCOME FROM ANY SOURCE** not needed to

meet the cost of the current year's expenditures as reserve funds: *Provided* That the total amount of reserves shall not exceed a ceiling equivalent to the amount actuarially estimated for two (2) years's projected Program expenditures: *Provided further*, That whenever actual reserves exceed the required ceiling at the end of the fiscal year, the excess of the PhilHealth reserve fund shall be used to increase the Program's benefits and to decrease the [amount of members' contributions] **PREMIUM CONTRIBUTION RATES OF MEMBERS: PROVIDED, FINALLY, THAT THE DOH AND PHILHEALTH SHALL INCLUDE A MECHANISM FOR LOWERING PREMIUM CONTRIBUTION IN THE IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THIS ACT.**

"x x x

(f) In bonds, securities, promissory notes, or other evidences of indebtedness of accredited and financially sound [medical] **GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL** institutions exclusively to finance the construction, improvement and maintenance of hospitals and other medical facilities, **INCLUDING PURCHASE AND MAINTENANCE OF CLINICAL EQUIPMENT AND DEVICES: Provided**, That such securities and instruments shall be guaranteed by the Republic of the Philippines or the issuing [medical] **GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL** institution and the issued securities are both rated triple 'A' by authorized accredited domestic rating agencies: *Provided, further*, That said investments shall not exceed ten percent (10%) of the total reserve fund; and

"x x x

[No portion of the reserve fund or income thereof shall accrue to the general fund of the National Government or to any of its agencies or instrumentalities, including government-owned or controlled corporations.]

"x x x

The PhilHealth shall manage the supplemental benefits fund to the minimum required to ensure that the supplemental benefit payments are secure.

NOTWITHSTANDING ANY LAW TO THE CONTRARY, NO PORTION OF THE RESERVE FUND OR ANY FUND OR INCOME OF PHILHEALTH, INCLUDING THE PROVIDENT FUND UNDER SECTION 16 (C) AND THE SPECIAL HEALTH FUND UNDER SECTION 20 OF THIS ACT, SHALL ACCRUE TO THE GENERAL FUND OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT OR TO ANY OF ITS AGENCIES OR INSTRUMENTALITIES, INCLUDING GOVERNMENT-OWNED OR-CONTROLLED CORPORATIONS."

SEC. 6. Section 12 of Republic Act No. 11223 is hereby amended to read as follows:

“SEC 12. Administrative Expense. – [No more than seven and one half percent (7.5%) of the annual total premium collected from direct and indirect contributory members during the immediately preceding year shall be allotted for the administrative cost of implementing the Program.]

THE CORPORATION IS AUTHORIZED TO CHARGE THE COSTS OF ADMINISTERING THE PROGRAM. SUCH COSTS MAY INCLUDE ADMINISTRATION, MONITORING, MARKETING AND PROMOTION, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, AUDIT AND EVALUATION, INFORMATION SERVICES, AND OTHER NECESSARY ACTIVITIES FOR THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF THE PROGRAM. THE TOTAL ANNUAL COSTS FOR THESE SHALL NOT EXCEED SEVEN AND ONE-HALF PERCENT (7.5%) OF THE TOTAL REIMBURSEMENTS OR TOTAL COST OF HEALTH SERVICES PAID BY THE CORPORATION IN THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING YEAR.”

SEC 7. Section 13(b) of Republic Act No. 11223 is hereby amended to read as follows

“SEC 13. PhilHealth Board of Directors. – x x x

(b) The Secretary of Health shall be an ex-officio [nonvoting] VOTING Chairperson of the Board.

“x x x”

SEC. 8. A new section 16-A is hereby added to Republic Act No. 11223, immediately after Section 16 thereof, to read as follows:

“SEC. 16-A. COMPETITION AND INNOVATION IN THE PHILHEALTH BENEFIT DELIVERY SYSTEM. – THE PHILHEALTH BENEFIT DELIVERY SYSTEM SHALL BE OPEN TO COMPETITION AND INNOVATION, WHERE MANAGEMENT MAY ALLOW ALTERNATIVE SUPPLY ARRANGEMENTS SUCH AS PUBLIC, PRIVATE, OR CONSORTIA OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ENTITIES TO COMPETITIVELY BID FOR THE PROVISION OF PHILHEALTH BENEFITS TO SELECT MEMBERSHIP GROUPS: PROVIDED, THAT THE SELECTION OF MEMBERSHIP GROUPS MUST RESULT IN COST-EFFECTIVE BENEFIT SPENDING: PROVIDED, FURTHER, THAT THE ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OF SUCH THIRD-PARTY PROVIDERS ARE INCLUDED IN THE OVERALL CAP LEGISLATED FOR THE PROGRAM: PROVIDED, FINALLY, THAT THE FOLLOWING SHALL BE KEY CONSIDERATIONS IN THE COMPETITIVE SELECTION OF BIDDERS:

(i) **MAXIMUM COVERAGE FOR A GIVEN PESO VALUE OF PREMIUM;**

(ii) **THE PROVIDER HAS A SUFFICIENT NETWORK OF OWN FACILITIES AND PARTNERS THAT CAN SUPPORT PORTABILITY OF BENEFITS; AND**

(iii) **CONCESSION PERIOD TO ALLOW PROVIDERS TO RECOVER INVESTMENTS."**

SEC. 9. Section 20 of Republic Act No. 11223 is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 20. Special Health Fund. — The province-wide or city-wide health system shall pool and manage, through a special health fund, all resources intended for health services to finance population-based and individual-based health services, health system operating costs, capital investments, and remuneration of [additional] health workers and incentives for all health workers: **PROVIDED, THAT COMPONENT CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES MAY ESTABLISH AND/OR MAINTAIN THEIR OWN SPECIAL HEALTH FUNDS FOR THE SAME PURPOSE AS PROVIDED FOR IN THIS ACT:** *Provided, FURTHER,* That the DOH, in consultation with the UHC-CC, DBM, and the LGUs, shall develop guidelines for the use of the Special Health Fund."

SEC. 10. Section 21 of Republic Act No. 11223 is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 21. Income Derived from PhilHealth Payments. — All income derived from PhilHealth payments shall accrue to the Special Health Fund **OF THE PROVINCE-WIDE OR CITY-WIDE HEALTH SYSTEMS AS ESTABLISHED OR MAINTAINED ABOVE: PROVIDED, THAT SUCH INCOME SHALL BE APPORTIONED BETWEEN AND AMONG THE VARIOUS SPECIAL HEALTH FUNDS ACCORDING TO A FORMULA TO BE DETERMINED BY THE UHC COORDINATING COUNCIL: PROVIDED, FURTHER, THAT ALL SPECIAL HEALTH FUNDS ARE** to be allocated by the LGUs exclusively for the improvement of the LGU health system: *Provided, FURTHERMORE,* That PhilHealth payments shall be credited to the annual regular income (ARI) of the LGU **THAT OWNS THE HEALTH CARE INSTITUTION FOR WHICH IT IS DUE: PROVIDED, FINALLY, THAT HEALTH FACILITIES OPERATING AS LOCAL ECONOMIC ENTERPRISES (LEE) SHALL BE ALLOWED TO RETAIN THEIR INCOME DERIVED FROM PHILHEALTH AND THAT LGUS MAY CONTINUE TO SUBSIDIZE LEE."**

SEC 11. A new Section 30-A shall be inserted before Section 30 of Republic Act No. 11223, which shall in turn be renumbered to Section 30-B. The new Section 30-A shall read as follows:

“SEC. 30-A. THE UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE COORDINATING COUNCIL (UHC-CC). – THE UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE COORDINATING COUNCIL (UHC-CC) IS HEREBY CREATED AS A NATIONAL GOVERNANCE BODY, WHICH SHALL INTENSIFY THE GOVERNMENT’S EFFORTS IN PURSUING THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLICIES, AS WELL AS UNDERTAKING PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS RELATING TO THE UHC. AS A NATIONAL GOVERNANCE BODY, IT SHALL EXPEDITE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RA NO. 11223 OR THE “UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE ACT” AT THE NATIONAL AND SUBNATIONAL LEVELS AND PROVIDE A VENUE FOR POLICY DISCOURSE AND OPERATIONAL COLLABORATION AMONG RELEVANT AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS. IT SHALL BE COMPOSED OF:

- (a) THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AS COUNCIL CHAIR;**
- (b) THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AS COUNCIL CO-CHAIR; AND**
- (c) COUNCIL MEMBERS COMPRISED OF HEAD OFFICIALS OR THEIR DESIGNATED ALTERNATES FROM THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS:**
 - (i) COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION (CHED);**
 - (ii) DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT (DBM);**
 - (iii) DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DEPED);**
 - (iv) DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE (DOF);**
 - (v) DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (DICT);**
 - (vi) DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT (DOLE);**
 - (vii) DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT (DSWD);**
 - (viii) DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMY, PLANNING, AND DEVELOPMENT (DEPDEV);**
 - (ix) PHILIPPINE STATISTICS AUTHORITY (PSA);**

- (x) PHILIPPINE INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES (PIDS);
- (xi) PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION (PHILHEALTH);
- (xii) PROFESSIONAL REGULATION COMMISSION (PRC);
- (xiii) TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA);
- (xiv) UNION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES OF THE PHILIPPINES (ULAP); AND
- (xv) UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES MANILA - NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH (UPM-NIH)

THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT SHALL PROVIDE FURTHER DIRECTION TO ITS ESTABLISHMENT AND FUNCTION BY ISSUANCE OF AN EXECUTIVE ORDER.

THE SECRETARIAT OF THE UHC-CC SHALL BE DESIGNATED BY THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH FROM THE EXISTING PERSONNEL OF THE DOH. IT MAY BE COMPLEMENTED BY ADDITIONAL STAFF FROM PHILHEALTH.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES NECESSARY FOR THE FUNCTIONS OF THE UHC-CC SHALL BE DRAWN FROM THE PHILHEALTH CORPORATE OPERATING BUDGET."

SEC 12. Subsections 32(c) and 32(d) are hereby added to Republic Act No. 11223, immediately after Section 32(b) thereof, to read as follows:

"SEC. 32. Monitoring, [and] Evaluation, AND ACCOUNTABILITY. –

"x x x

(C) IN ADDITION TO AUDITS BY THE COMMISSION ON AUDIT (COA) AS MANDATED BY LAW AND RELEVANT REGULATIONS, PHILHEALTH SHALL BE SUBJECT TO EXTERNAL AUDIT AT LEAST ONCE EVERY FISCAL YEAR BY AN ACCREDITED PRIVATE SECTOR AUDITING FIRM TO BE IDENTIFIED BY THE UHC-CC; AND

(D) THE PHILHEALTH PRESIDENT AND CEO SHALL SUBMIT TO THE PHILHEALTH BOARD, THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES, AND CONGRESS, A

**REPORT ON THE MEASURES TAKEN BY THE CORPORATION
TO ADDRESS ISSUES RAISED IN AUDIT REPORTS BY THE COA
AND IN THE THIRD-PARTY AUDIT."**

SEC 13. Section 34 of Republic Act No. 11223 is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 34. *Health Technology Assessment (HTA)*. – (a) The HTA process shall be institutionalized as a fair and transparent priority setting mechanism that shall be recommendatory to the DOH and Philhealth for [the development of policies and programs, regulation, and the determination of a range of entitlements such as drugs, medicines, pharmaceutical products, and other devices, procedures and services] **THE FINANCING OF A SPECIFIC HEALTH TECHNOLOGY USED AS A HUMAN INTERVENTION AS PART OF BENEFITS OR PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION** as provided for under this Act: *Provided, That* investments on any health technology or development of any benefit package by the DOH and PhilHealth shall be [based on the positive] **INFORMED BY THE** recommendations of the HTA: *Provided, further, That* despite having undergone the HTA process, all health technology, intervention or benefit package shall still be subjected to periodic review: *Provided, furthermore, That* a health technology assessment may be conducted as new evidence emerges which may have substantial impact on the initial coverage decision by the DOH or PhilHealth: *Provided, finally, That* the HTA process shall adhere to the principles of ethical soundness, inclusiveness and preferential regard for the underserved, evidence-based and scientific defensibility, transparency and accountability, efficiency, enforceability and availability of remedies and due process.

(b) The following criteria must be observed in the conduct of HTA:

(1) *Responsiveness to DISEASE Magnitude, AND Severity[, and Equity]*. – The health interventions must address the top medical conditions that place the heaviest burden on the population, including dimensions of magnitude or the number of people affected by a health problem, and severity or health loss by an individual as a result of disease, such as death, handicap, disability or pain, and conditions of the poorest and most vulnerable population;

(2) *Safety and Effectiveness*. – Each intervention must have undergone [Phase IV] **APPROPRIATE** clinical trial. [, and systematic review and meta analysis must be readily available.] The interventions must also not pose any harm to the users and health care providers **IN CASES WHERE THE INTERVENTION MAY CAUSE HARM SUCH ASH RADIATION DOSES, THE INTERVENTION MUST INCLUDE PRECAUTIONS OR MEASURES TO MINIMIZE THE RISK TO THE USER AND HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS.**

ALL DRUGS MUST HAVE UNDERGONE PHARMACOVIGILANCE STUDIES SUCH AS, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, PHASE IV CLINICAL TRIAL OR REAL-WORLD EVIDENCE, AND THERE MUST BE A BENEFIT-RISK ASSESSMENT: *PROVIDED*, THAT FOR THE FOLLOWING HEALTH TECHNOLOGIES WHERE PHASE IV CLINICAL TRIALS MAY NOT BE CONSISTENTLY AVAILABLE, REAL-WORLD EVIDENCE, INCLUDING ALL RELEVANT AND DEPENDABLE SOURCES OF EVIDENCE SHALL BE CONSIDERED:

- (i) TRADITIONAL MEDICINE;
- (ii) PREVENTIVE AND PROMOTIVE HEALTH;
- (iii) MEDICAL AND SURGICAL PROCEDURES;
- (iv) CLINICAL EQUIPMENT AND DEVICES; AND
- (v) DIGITAL AND OTHER HEALTH TECHNOLOGIES.

PROVIDED, THAT IN CASE OF A PANDEMIC OR UPON THE DECLARATION OF A STATE OF PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY, THE REQUIREMENT FOR POST MARKETING SURVEILLANCE STUDIES FOR DRUGS AND VACCINES MAY BE DISPENSED WITH: *PROVIDED, FURTHER*, THAT SUCH DRUGS OR VACCINES RECEIVE EMERGENCY USE AUTHORIZATION (EUA) FROM THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION WHILE THE RESULTS OF RANDOMIZED TRIALS, WHETHER PRELIMINARY OR FINAL RESULTS, ARE NOT AVAILABLE.

“x x x

(6) *ETHICAL, LEGAL SOCIAL, AND HEALTH SYSTEMS IMPLICATIONS.* – THE HTAC MUST BE GIVEN THE FLEXIBILITY TO MODIFY ITS EVALUATION FRAMEWORK DURING PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES WHEREIN THERE ARE LIMITATIONS IN TERMS OF TYPES OF EVIDENCE AND URGENCY IN PRODUCING RECOMMENDATIONS.

EACH INTERVENTION MAY BE ASSESSED FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- (i) ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS – SITUATIONS WHERE THE USE OR ABSENCE OF THE TECHNOLOGY MAY RUN COUNTER TO THE PRINCIPLE OF JUSTICE, EQUITY OR FAIRNESS OF HEALTHCARE SUCH AS RISKS

OF THE TECHNOLOGY WITH RESPECT TO BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS;

(ii) LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS – LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL LAWS CONCERNING REGULATION OF PARTICULAR HEALTH TECHNOLOGIES SUCH AS PATENT, MARKET ENTRY, OFF-LABEL USE, DATE PROTECTION, PRODUCT LIABILITY, PATIENT RIGHTS, DISEASE-SPECIFIC LAWS AND POLICIES; IMPACT OF DECISIONS TO OTHER EXISTING POLICIES;

(iii) SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS – CONSIDERATION OF PATIENT EXPERIENCE, PREFERENCES AND VALUES SUCH AS MORAL, RELIGIOUS

(iv) HEALTH SYSTEM IMPLICATIONS – EFFECTS ON THE CURRENT HEALTH SYSTEM AND SERVICE DELIVERY; CHANGE IN CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES AND IMPACT TO THE VARIATION IN PRACTICE, ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY, INFRASTRUCTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCE NEEDS;”

(c) The HTAC, to be composed of health experts, shall be [created] **CONSTITUTED** within the [DOH] **DOST** and supported by a Secretariat and a Technical Unit for Policy, Planning and Evaluation with evidence generation and validation capacity **IN ITS TRANSITION INTO AN INDEPENDENT AGENCY ATTACHED TO THE DOST UPON ESTABLISHMENT AND EFFECTIVE OPERATION UNDER THE DOH.** The HTAC shall: (1) facilitate provision of financing and/or coverage recommendations on health technologies to be financed by DOH and PhilHealth; (2) oversee and coordinate the HTA process with DOH and PhilHealth; and (3) review and assess existing DOH and PhilHealth benefit packages. [Within five (5) years after the establishment and effective operation of the HTAC, it shall transition into an independent entity separate from the DOH, attached to DOST.]

(d) x x x

The subcommittees to be constituted shall include, among others: Drugs, Vaccines, Clinical Equipment and Devices, Medical and Surgical Procedure, Preventive and Promotive Health Services, and Traditional Medicine, **AND DIGITAL AND OTHER HEALTH TECHNOLOGIES.** Each subcommittee shall have a minimum of [one (1) and maximum of] three (3) [non-voting] members [~~for each subcommittee~~].

The HTAC may call upon technical resource persons from the **DOH**, PhilHealth, Food and Drug Administration (FDA), patient groups, [and clinical medicine] **HTA-RELATED** experts, [as regular resource persons; and]

representatives from the private sector, and health care providers as [by invitation] resource persons. **THESE RESOURCE PERSONS EXCEPT GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES SHALL RECEIVE AN HONORARIUM IN ACCORDANCE WITH EXISTING BUDGETARY LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS.**

(e) The HTAC's core committee and subcommittee members shall be appointed by the Secretary of [Health] **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOLLOWING ITS TRANSITION FROM DOH INTO AN ATTACHED AGENCY UNDER DOST** for a term of [three (3)] **FOUR (4)** years except for the medico-legal expert, ethicist, and the sociologist or anthropologist who shall serve for a term of [four (4)] **FIVE (5)** years: *Provided*, That no member shall serve for more than three (3) consecutive terms; *Provided, further*, That the members of the HTAC **AND ANY INVITED RESOURCE PERSONS EXCEPT GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES** shall receive an honorarium in accordance with existing [policies] **BUDGETARY LAWS, RULES, AND REGULATIONS.** *Provided, furthermore*, That the DOH shall promulgate the nomination process for all HTAC members with a clear set of qualifications, credentials, and recommendations from the sectors concerned[:*Provided, finally*, That the Secretary of the DOST shall appoint the members of the HTAC upon its transition into an attached agency under DOST]."

SEC 14. Section 36 of Republic Act No. 11223 is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 36. Health Information System. — x x x

PHILHEALTH SHALL MAINTAIN AN ELECTRONIC NATIONAL HEALTH RECORDS SYSTEM WHERE PATIENT DATA, INCLUDING ALL REQUESTED, ACTUALLY GRANTED, AND PAID CLAIMS AND BENEFITS SHALL BE STORED, AND MAY BE OBTAINED UPON REQUEST BY THE PATIENT. THE DICT SHALL PROVIDE SUPPORT IN DESIGNING A SECURE DATABASE WITH MECHANISMS FOR DETECTING PROBABLE FRAUD: PROVIDED, THAT THE DATABASE SHALL ABIDE BY THE 'ONE-PATIENT, ONE-RECORD' PRINCIPLE."

SEC 15. Section 38 of Republic Act No. 11223 is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 38. Penal Provisions. —

"x x x

(F) ANY LGU OFFICIAL WHO MISAPPROPRIATES, DIVERTS, OR USES FUNDS ALLOCATED UNDER THIS ACT FOR NON-HEALTH RELATED EXPENDITURES, OR PERMITS SUCH MISUSE KNOWINGLY, SHALL BE SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING PENALTIES:

(1) A FINE OR NOT LESS THAN ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS (PHP 100,000.00) AND NOT MORE THAN FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS (PHP 500,00.00) PER VIOLATION;

(2) IMPRISONMENT FOR A TERM OF NOT LESS THAN ONE (1) YEAR AND NOT MORE THAN SIX (6) YEARS; AND

(3) DISQUALIFICATION FROM HOLDING ANY PUBLIC OFFICE FOR A PERIOD OF NOT LESS THAN FIVE (5) YEARS."

SEC 16. Section 43 of Republic Act No. 11223 is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 43. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR). — The DOH and the PhilHealth, in consultation [and coordination] with [appropriate national government agencies, civil society organizations, nongovernment organizations, private sector representatives, and other stakeholders] THE UHC-CC, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act no later than one hundred eighty (180) days upon the effectivity of this Act."

SEC 17. *Non-diminution of Benefits.* — Nothing in this Act shall be construed to eliminate or diminish any benefits or entitlements already granted to members of PhilHealth.

SEC. 18. *Separability Clause.* — If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder thereof not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 19. *Repealing Clause.* — All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, letters of instruction, proclamations, and administrative regulations that are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 20. *Effectivity.* — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,