

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



HOUSE BILL NO. 7295

Introduced by **REP. BERNADETTE "DETTE" G. ESCUDERO**

**AN ACT
ESTABLISHING MENTAL HEALTH UNITS IN ALL GOVERNMENT
HOSPITALS IN THE COUNTRY**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article II, Section 15 of 1987 Constitution provides that the State shall protect the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them. Also, the State shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall endeavor to make essential goods, health, and other social services available to all the people at affordable cost. There shall be priority for the needs of the underprivileged sick, elderly, disabled, women, and children.¹

Recent studies have highlighted a significant gap in mental health services within the Philippines. According to the World Health Organization, mental health disorders affect one in four people globally, yet access to mental health professionals remains limited, particularly in public healthcare settings. Research by the Department of Health indicates that the shortage of psychiatrists and mental health professionals contributes to inadequate mental health support, exacerbating conditions and leading to poorer health outcomes for those affected.² In 2019, the country lost 68.9 billion pesos because of decreased productivity due to mental health illness. However, the 2021 Department of Health budget only allocates 286 million pesos, or 3%, to mental health. Poor mental health is connected to reduce economic productivity. Investing and addressing more effectively can lead to better public health and economic outcomes.³

This bill proposes to establish mental health units in all government hospitals across the country and deploy psychiatrist and mental health practitioners in these units. By ensuring that each government hospital has three (3) dedicated psychiatric professionals, the bill aims to enhance the quality and accessibility of mental health

¹ Article II, Section 15, 1987 Philippine Constitution

² Mental health issues. (n.d.). Socioeconomic Research Portal for the Philippines. <https://serp-p.pids.gov.ph/feature/public/index-view?slug=Mental-Health-Issues>.

³ Arevalo, et al. (2022, April). Addressing the gaps in the Philippine public mental health strategy. The Lancet Psychiatry. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366\(22\)00040-2/fulltext#back-bib4](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366(22)00040-2/fulltext#back-bib4).

services, providing timely and effective care to individuals in need. The presence of psychiatrists in these facilities will facilitate comprehensive mental health assessments, diagnosis, and treatment, thereby addressing mental health issues with the same urgency and importance as physical health conditions. Improved mental health services will help lessen the financial burden on individuals, families, and people who find it difficult to pay for the costs of therapy.

The need for this bill stems from the growing recognition of mental health as a critical aspect of public health. Institutionalizing psychiatrists in government hospitals will not only bridge the existing gaps in mental health services in the country but also promote a more integrated approach to healthcare that considers mental and physical health as interlinked. For people and communities, improved mental health services can lead to a higher economic productivity. By improving access to psychiatric care, this bill seeks to advance the nation's overall health standards, reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues, and ensure that every individual has the opportunity to receive the care they need



HON. BERNADETTE UDETTE" G. ESCUDERO

Representative
1st District, Sorsogon

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

HOUSE BILL NO. 7295

Introduced by **REP. BERNADETTE "DETTE" G. ESCUDERO**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING MENTAL HEALTH UNITS IN ALL GOVERNMENT
HOSPITALS IN THE COUNTRY

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 "Mental Health Units
2 in Government Hospitals Act."

3
4 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – It is hereby the policy of the State to address
5 concerns on the availability and accessibility of mental health services in government
6 hospitals. By ensuring the availability of psychiatrists in all government hospitals, this
7 policy aims to improve access to mental health services for individuals in need. The
8 inclusion of psychiatrists in government hospitals will lead to improved access, timely
9 diagnosis and treatment, and facilitate integrated care for better patient outcomes.

10
11 **SEC. 3. Mental Health Units in Government Hospitals.** – All government
12 hospitals shall establish Mental Health Units in the Philippine and shall have at least
13 three (3) psychiatrists on full-time basis to ensure that individuals seeking mental
14 health services in government hospitals have access to qualified psychiatrists for
15 diagnosis, treatment, and care.

16
17 **SEC. 4. Separability Clause.** – If, for any reason, part of this Act shall be
18 rendered unconstitutional or invalid, other parts or provisions hereof which are not
19 thereby affected shall continue to be in effect and full force.

20
21 **SEC. 5. Repealing Clause.** – All orders, rules and regulations, issuances, or
22 any part thereof inconsistent with the provision of this Act are hereby repealed,
23 amended, or modified accordingly.
24

1 **SEC. 6. Effectivity Clause.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after
2 publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general
3 circulation.

Approved,