

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **7345**



INTRODUCED BY REP. PATRICK MICHAEL “PM” D. VARGAS

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNITY
DRUGSTORES IN EVERY BARANGAY, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE
"BOTIKA NG BARANGAY"

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Constitution provides, among others, that “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 people at affordable cost.”

Despite this constitutional guarantee, access to affordable and essential medicines remains a persistent challenge for many Filipinos, particularly those living in rural and economically disadvantaged barangays. In many communities, commercial drugstores are either inaccessible or entirely absent, forcing residents to travel long distances or forego timely medical treatment altogether.

To address this gap, the Department of Health (DOH) has long implemented the Botika ng Barangay (BNB) Program pursuant to DOH Administrative Order 144 series of 2004. Under this framework, community-managed drug outlets are established and operated by local government units, legitimate community organizations, or non-government organizations, with trained personnel and supervision by licensed pharmacist. These BNBs are authorized to dispense essential, low-cost generic medicines listed in the Philippine National Drug Formulary, thereby ensuring that basic drugs are made available at prices significantly lower than commercial brands.

While the DOH administrative order establishing the BNB program has demonstrated effectiveness in improving access to medicine at the community level, its implementation remains dependent on executive policy and available resources, resulting in uneven coverage and sustainability concerns across barangays.

The bill therefore seeks to institutionalize the existing Botika ng Barangay program by providing it with a clear statutory basis, ensuring its continuity, nationwide implementation, and integration into the country's long-term public health system. By mandating the establishment of a Botika ng Barangay in every barangay and prioritizing economically disadvantaged area, the measure strengthens and expands an already proven DOH initiative.

Institutionalizing the Botika ng Barangay program will guarantee consistent access to affordable essential medicines, protect the gains of the existing DOH administrative order, and reinforce the State's commitment to primary health care and preventive medicine-especially for the most vulnerable sectors of society.

Through this measure the State reaffirms that access to life-saving medicines is not a privilege but a basic right that must be protected, sustained, and made universally available.

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



REP. PATRICK MICHAEL "PM" D. VARGAS
Fifth District, Quezon City

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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 "*Botika ng Barangay Act.*"

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them. Towards this end, the State shall provide adequate social services and endeavor to make essential goods, health and other social services available to every barangay at affordable cost.

SECTION 3. *Botika ng Barangay.* - The Department of Health shall, within sixty (60) days after the approval of this Act, undertake a three-year program for the establishment of barangay drugstores or Botika ng Barangay (BNB) in every barangay, giving priority to barangays on the basis of population, poverty incidence, extent of medical health care and/or services, geographical conditions, financial and other socio-economic factors and such other considerations as may be deemed necessary in undertaking the program within the context of national plans and policies on social services, health and medical care.

SECTION 4. *Establishment Priority.* - The Department of Health (DOH) shall, in the establishment of the BNB, undertake prior consultations

with the Municipal Development Council concerned; *Provided*, That in the establishment of the BNB, highest priority shall be given to those economically disadvantaged barangays. Existing BNBs shall be maintained and shall be covered by relevant provisions of this Act.

SECTION 5. *Drugs Available.* - The BNB shall make available, only those drugs included in the "core list" of the national drug formulary, and the names thereof listed in their respective generic and trade names made available to the public.

SECTION 6. *Botika ng Barangay Aide.* - Sale of medicines at the BNB shall be facilitated by an aide, known as the Botika ng Barangay Aide, who shall be chosen by and trained under the direction of the Municipality or City Health Office, in close coordination with the Punong Barangay and head of the Barangay Health Center.

SECTION 7. *Implementing Rules and Guidelines.* - The Secretary of Health shall issue the necessary rules and guidelines as may be needed to fully implement the provisions of this Act. In addition, the DOH shall also embark on a sustained promotional campaign to increase the community's awareness of the BNB through its personnel, non-governmental organizations, barangay official and the print and broadcast media.

SECTION 8. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act or any part thereof shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions, as far as they are separable, shall remain in force and effect.

SECTION 9. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations or thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SECTION 10. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,