

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 7551



INTRODUCED BY HONORABLE JANICE V. DEGAMO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

An estimated 1.3 billion people or 16 percent of the world's population experience disability, according to a 2023 data published by the World Health Organization.¹ In the Philippines, the National Council for Disability Affairs (NCDA) reported that by mid-2025, more than 2.5 million Filipinos were registered as persons with disabilities (PWD). The majority or 827,189 of those who registered have physical disabilities that limit the function of their limbs or fine or gross motor abilities while other prevalent categories include speech impairment (335,763), psychosocial disability (314,210); visual disability (251,302); mental disability (152,762); intellectual disability (137,491); deaf or hard of hearing (129,021); cancer (110,880); learning disability (102,623); and rare disease (49,112).²

Persons with disabilities face many challenges and barriers in the health system such as negative attitudes and discriminatory practices among healthcare workers; lack of information or data collection and analysis on disability, and inaccessible health facilities and information.³

Article XIII, Section 11 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution requires the State to adopt a comprehensive health strategy that ensures essential goods and services are affordable and accessible for all. Likewise, Section 13, emphasize the need to support persons with disabilities for their rehabilitation, self-reliance, and full integration into the mainstream society. Moreover, as a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Philippines is mandated to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to the same range, quality, and standard of free or affordable health care as other people.⁴

¹ Disability, World Health Organization, 7 March 2023, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health> (last accessed 20 January 2026)

² Registered PWDs in PH now at 2.5 M, Dexter Cabalaza, Inquirer.net, June 19, 2025, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/2072065/registered-pwds-in-ph-now-at-2-5m> (last accessed 20 January 2026)

³ [See footnote 1.]

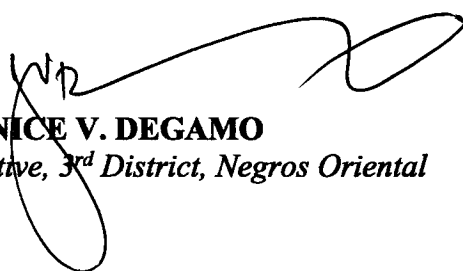
⁴ [See footnote 1.]

However, despite significant legislative efforts promote the rights and welfare of persons with disabilities through various laws such as Republic Act No. 7277 or the Magna Carta for Persons with Disability, Republic Act Nos. 9442 and 11228 expanding the rights and privileges of persons with disabilities and Republic Act No. 11036 or the Mental Health Act, there is yet to be established, an institution which will provide free and quality rehabilitation and therapy services for PWDs all over the country.

According to the World Health Organization, global rehabilitation needs continue to be unmet due to multiple factors including: (a) lack of prioritization, funding, policies, and plans for rehabilitation at a national level; lack of available rehabilitation services outside urban areas, and long waiting times; and high out-of-pocket expenses and non-existent or inadequate means of funding, among others.⁵

Hence, it is the intention of this bill to uphold the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities, promote their holistic care, and alleviate the financial burden that comes with therapy and rehabilitation services through the establishment of therapy and rehabilitation services centers in every province, city, and strategic areas in the country.

Thus, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



JANICE V. DEGAMO
Representative, 3rd District, Negros Oriental

⁵ Rehabilitation, World Health Organization, 22 April 2024, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/rehabilitation> (last accessed 20 January 2026)

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Introduced by **HONORABLE JANICE V. DEGAMO**

AN ACT

**ESTABLISHING NATIONAL THERAPY AND REHABILITATION
SERVICES CENTERS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (PWD) IN EVERY
PROVINCE, CITY, AND OTHER STRATEGIC AREAS THROUGHOUT THE
COUNTRY**

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 “*National Therapy and Rehabilitation Services Centers Act of 2026*”

Section 2. Declaration of Policy.- It is the declared policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health and well-being of Persons with Disabilities by giving them full support to the improvement of their total well-being.

The State shall also provide all the assistance necessary to facilitate the exercise of rights of all PWDs and extend its support to other individuals that need similar care for all time.

Section 3. Establishment of National Therapy and Rehabilitation Services Centers for Persons with Disabilities - There is hereby established in all capital cities of provinces, highly urbanized cities, and other strategic areas throughout the country a National Therapy and Rehabilitation Services Centers for Persons With Disabilities (NTRSC-PWD) herein referred to as “NTRSC-PWD”, which shall be community-based and maintained through the cooperation of their respective Local Government Units (LGUs) and the Department of Health (DOH).

Section 4. Functions of the National Therapy and Rehabilitation Services Centers for Persons With Disabilities- The NTRSC-PWD shall have the following functions:

A. Therapy and Rehabilitation Services- The NTRSC-PWD shall serve as dedicated units for the assessment, therapy, and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. The following services shall be provided to persons with disabilities free of charge:

1. *Prevention and early detection-* immunization, nutrition, environmental protection, genetic counselling, detection and screening;
2. *Therapy services-* speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical rehabilitation, behavioral therapy and other assistive and rehabilitative interventions as determined by DOH;
3. *Medical Treatment, Rehabilitation and Assistive Technologies-* provisions of medical care, therapy , and sustained access to assistive health technologies necessary for rehabilitation and social integration.

In case the NTRSC-PWD is unable to provide for the necessary treatment, it shall assist the person with disability in searching or refer an institution that could provide such treatment.

B. Distribution of Assistive Devices- The NTRSC-PWD shall provide assistive devices to persons with disabilities such as but not limited to hearing aids, wheelchairs, spectacles, prostheses and devices that support memory. Provided that priority shall be given to indigent persons with disabilities. Provided further that in case the NTRSC-PWD is unable to provide the necessary assistive device, it shall assist the person with disability in searching or refer an institution that could provide such device;

C. Capacity Building and Advocacy- The NTRSC-PWD shall implement continuing education and training programs for therapy providers, medical staff involved in the care of persons with disabilities, families, caregivers, and communities to better support people with disabilities. They shall likewise promote the rights of persons with disabilities by lobbying for policies for the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities.

D. Research and Development- The NTRSC-PWD shall collaborate with different institutions including academic institutions, non-government organizations, and other relevant stakeholders to contribute to the development of new therapies, assistive technologies, and inclusive practices.

The Department of Health shall accredit each center in order to maintain quality medical services.

Medical employees shall be maintained by the Regional Offices of the Department of Health (DOH) while non-medical employees of each institution shall be maintained by the respective LGU. Each center shall maintain, within its staff complement or through contractual arrangements, at least:

- one (1) Developmental Pediatrician;
- One (1) Occupational Therapist;
- One (1) Speech and Language Therapist;

- One (1) Physical Therapist;
- One (1) Behavioral Therapist or Clinical Psychologist for PWD care and intervention
- One (1) social worker

Section 5. PhilHealth Coordination Center for benefit packages for persons with disabilities- NTRSC-PWD shall serve as coordination point for Philhealth-covered benefits such as but not limited to Z Benefits packages, Benefit Package for Physical Medicine, Rehabilitation Services, and Assistive Mobility Devices, and Outpatient Package for Mental Health, among others as provided under Republic Act No 11223 or the Universal Health Care Act , Republic Act No. 7277 or the Magna Carta for Persons with Disability as amended by Republic Act No 11228, Republic Act No. 11036 or the Mental Health Act and other related laws and policies. .

Section 6. Services for Children with Disabilities- The NTRSC-PWD shall have a dedicated department for children with disabilities which shall promote their rights to achieve their holistic and inclusive development through disability-inclusive health services from early childhood through adolescence.

Section 7. Infrastructure- The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) together with the concerned LGU shall undertake the construction of the NTRSC-PWD subject to the provisions of Republic Act No. 7277 or the Magna Carta for Persons with Disability and Batas Pambansa Blg 344 or the Accessibility Law.

Section 8. Appropriations- The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the Department of Health and the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for this continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA).

Section 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations- Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Health (DOH), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), and the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (Philhealth), in consultation with the National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and relevant stakeholders shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for its effective implementation.

The implementing rules and regulations shall be consistent with Republic Act No 11223 or the Universal Health Care Act , Republic Act No. 7277 or the Magna Carta for Persons with Disability as amended by Republic Act No 11228, Republic Act No. 11036 or the Mental Health Act.

Section 8. Separability Clause.- If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provisions not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.

Section. 9. Repealing Clause. - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive, letter of instruction, rule or regulation inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,