



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

House Bill No. 7739

Introduced by Representative FRANZ FERNANDEZ LEGAZPI

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It is the Constitutional policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people. Subsumed in this mandate is the establishment of an integrated and comprehensive approach to health care with the objective to make essential services accessible and affordable to all. Mental health is an integral component of overall health, yet it has long remained underprioritized despite the growing prevalence of mental, neurological, and substance use (MNS) disorders in the country.

Republic Act No. 11036, otherwise known as the *Mental Health Act*, and Republic Act No. 11223, or the *Universal Health Care Act*, recognize the State's responsibility to ensure the availability, accessibility, and quality of mental health services. However, the country continues to face systemic challenges in mental health care delivery, including limited specialized facilities, fragmented services, insufficient research and training capacity, and weak integration of mental health into the broader health system.

This proposed measure seeks to address these gaps by establishing the National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH) as the State's primary institution for mental health care, research, training, and policy development. The bill transforms the National Center for Mental Health (NCMH) into the NIMH, expanding its mandate to serve not only as a treatment facility but also as the national institute for mental health service provision and innovation, professional workforce development, and clinical and evidenced-based policymaking.

The bill defines the scope and functions of the NIMH to include the provision of specialized and comprehensive mental health services; the conduct of research to inform national mental health strategies; the development of training and education programs for health professionals and community-based providers; and the promotion of mental health and wellness in coordination with local government units and stakeholders. It emphasizes the delivery of specialized care across the life course and for diverse populations, including children, older persons, individuals with substance use disorders, and those requiring rehabilitative services.

To ensure effective governance and accountability, the bill places the NIMH under the supervision of the Department of Health, establishes its organizational structure, and delineates its clinical, research, training, community-based, and administrative functions. It also provides for an institutional bed capacity that supports both service delivery and the long-term goal of deinstitutionalization through strengthened referral systems and community-based care.

By institutionalizing the National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH), this bill seeks to strengthen the country's mental health system, promote early intervention and recovery, and uphold the dignity and rights of Filipinos with mental health conditions.

For the foregoing reasons, the approval of this bill is earnestly sought.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Franz Fernandez Legazpi".

FRANZ FERNANDEZ LEGAZPI
Representative, PINOY WORKERS PARTYLIST

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

House Bill No. **7739**

Introduced by Representative FRANZ FERNANDEZ LEGAZPI

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR MENTAL HEALTH (NIMH),
DEFINING AND EXPANDING ITS MANDATE AND FUNCTIONS, AND
APPROPRIATING 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 "National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH) Act."

Sec. 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is the policy of the State to protect and promote the mental health and well-being of all Filipinos, as mandated by the 1987 Constitution. Article II, Section 15 affirms that "The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them," recognizing mental health as an essential part of overall health. Likewise, Article XIII, Section 11 emphasizes the State's duty to adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health, making essential health services accessible to all at affordable costs.

To this end, the NIMH is established as the national institution responsible for the provision of mental health care, research, and training. The transformation of NCMH to NIMH shall fulfill the State's obligation under Republic Act No. 11036 (Mental Health Act) and Republic Act No. 11223 (Universal Health Care Act), ensuring that all individuals have access to necessary and high-quality mental health services, regardless of civil, socio-economic, or cultural background.

Sec. 3. Scope and Coverage. - This Act shall cover the reorganization, governance, and functions of the NIMH, ensuring that it operates as the primary institution for mental health care, research, training, and policy recommendation in the Philippines. NIMH shall serve as the national hub for mental health and wellness promotion and the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of individuals with mental health conditions and related neurological disorders, with the objective of fully integrating mental health services into the country's overall health system.

The scope of this Act includes the following:

1. Provision of specialized mental health services for individuals with mental, neurological, and substance use (MNS) disorders, ensuring access to quality care for all sectors of society, including vulnerable groups.
2. Development and implementation of training programs for health professionals, community health workers, and stakeholders involved in mental health services.

- 1 3. Conduct mental health research to inform the development of strategies and
2 evidence-based policy recommendations aimed at improving mental health care
3 delivery, prevention, and rehabilitation programs.
- 4 4. Implementation of mental health promotion, wellness advocacy, and mental health
5 services in coordination with local government units (LGUs), providing early
6 intervention, rehabilitation, and reintegration of individuals with mental health
7 conditions.
- 8 5. Delivery of specialized care in fields such as child and adolescent psychiatry,
9 geriatric mental health, forensic psychiatry, consultation-liaison psychiatry, social and
10 community psychiatry, and addiction treatment.

11
12 The provisions of this Act shall apply to all operations of the NIMH, ensuring compliance with
13 national standards, and establishing mechanisms for oversight monitoring, and reporting to the
14 Department of Health (DOH) and other relevant agencies.

15
16 **Sec. 4. Organization.** – The NIMH shall operate under the control and supervision of the
17 DOH as a specialized health care institution for mental health.

18
19 It shall be headed by a Director, assisted by an Assistant Director, both of whom shall be
20 appointed by the Secretary of Health. The Director shall be responsible for the implementation of
21 policies and overseeing the programs and day-to-day operations of the institution. The NIMH
22 shall also have the necessary technical, administrative support staff, and consultants to fulfill its
23 mandate.

24
25 The NIMH staff shall have the following divisions:

- 26 1. Clinical Services Division: Responsible for the delivery of comprehensive, high-
27 quality patient care, including inpatient and outpatient services, individual: suffering
28 from mental, neuro-related, and substance use (MNS) disorders, including their co-
29 morbidities.
- 30 2. Training and Education Division: Develop and implement training programs for
31 health professionals, community health workers, and other stakeholders to ensure a
32 functional and competent mental health service provider network across the country, in
33 line with the objectives of the Universal Health Care Act.
- 34 3. Research and Policy Division: Conduct cutting-edge research on mental health,
35 develop innovative strategies and approaches to treatment and rehabilitation, and
36 translate these findings for recommendations to DOH into national mental health
37 policies and programs. It shall serve as the central repository of mental health data,
38 contributing to evidence-based policy-making.
- 39 4. Linkages and Community-Based Services: Develop and implement linkages and care
40 networking programs and coordinate with local government units (LGUs) and
41 stakeholders to establish community-based mental health services nationwide. ^[1]These
42 efforts aim to promote early intervention, rehabilitation, and the integration of
43 individuals with mental health conditions into society.
- 44 5. Administrative and Support Services Division: Provides administrative and
45 operational support to the NIMH.
- 46 6. Finance Division: Manages the financial resources of the institution.

47
48
49 **Sec. 5. Bed Capacity.** - The NIMH shall operate with an institutional bed capacity of two
50 thousand and five hundred (2,500) beds, which shall be scaled down as part of
51 deinstitutionalization efforts, including strengthening referral networks and establishing
52 community-based mental health services, and transforming the NCMH into a specialized hub for
53 mental health training, research, and information.

54
55 The DOH shall ensure adequate staffing, equipment, and facilities to meet this capacity,
56 consistent with the requirements of modern standards. In coordination with the Department of

1 Budget and Management (DBM) and the Civil Service Commission (CSC), it shall determine the
2 additional plantilla positions necessary to meet the institution's operational needs.
3

4 **Sec. 6. *Land Transfer and Property Title.*** - The real property, which encompasses the land
5 and any structures or improvements on that land and under the possession of the institution, shall
6 now be owned or reserved for, or may hereafter be given, donated, acquired, transferred or
7 conveyed to the NCMH by the Philippine Government, its branches and instrumentalities, any
8 foreign government, as well as by trust, foundations, corporations, or persons, alien or domestic,
9 in order to carry out its purposes and objectives as set herein.
10

11 In accordance with the preceding paragraph, these properties shall be exempt from the coverage
12 of Republic Act No. 5260, which permits a Trustee Committee to sell the Welfareville property
13 in order to fully execute Section 29 of the Mental Health Act.
14

15 **Sec. 7. *Powers and Functions.*** - The NIMH shall have the following powers and functions
16 in accordance with this Act:
17

- 18 (a) Provide comprehensive mental health services which include diagnostic, therapeutic,
19 rehabilitative, and preventive care for mental, neurological, and substance use
20 disorders.
- 21 (b) Establish and provide specialized services in areas such as child and adolescent
22 psychiatry, geriatric mental health, forensic psychiatry, addiction treatment, and
23 psychosocial support, in order to address the specific needs of diverse populations.
- 24 (c) Develop and implement training programs for health professionals, including
25 psychiatrists, psychologists, psychiatric nurses, social workers, and community health
26 workers, to ensure the development of a competent and sustainable mental health
27 workforce.
- 28 (d) Conduct research to advance the understanding of mental health conditions and
29 develop innovative strategies for treatment and rehabilitation as well as gather data to
30 develop and evidence-based strategies and policy recommendations to the DOH and
31 other relevant government bodies to improve mental health services nationwide.
- 32 (e) Design and implement, in partnership with LGUs and other stakeholders community-
33 based mental health services that facilitate wellness promotion as well as early
34 detection, intervention, rehabilitation, and reintegration of individuals with mental
35 health conditions into society.
- 36 (f) Form collaborations with local and international organizations, academic and search
37 institutions, and other relevant stakeholders to advance the goals of mental health
38 promotion, education, and service provision.
- 39 (g) Perform such other related activities as may be assigned by the Secretary of Health.
40

41 **Sec. 8. *Role of the DOH's Mental Health Program Division.*** - The Mental Health Program
42 Division (MHD) of the DOH shall serve as the principal body responsible for coordinating with
43 the NIMH to ensure the alignment of national mental health policies, programs, and initiatives.
44 The NIMH, in coordination with MHD, shall provide technical guidance, establish standards,
45 and monitor the implementation of mental health services across all DOH-retained hospitals and
46 regional health unit
47

48 **Sec. 9. *Funding.*** - The initial funding for the implementation of this Act shall be charged
49 against the current budget of the NCMH. Thereafter, the necessary funds for the operation and
50 maintenance of the NIMH shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA).
51

52 **Sec. 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** - The DOH, in consultation with relevant
53 stakeholders, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective
54 implementation of this Act within (90) days from its effectivity.
55

1 **Sec. 11. *Transitory Provisions.*** – All existing employees of the NCMH, including medical
2 and non-medical personnel, shall continue in their current positions, subject to the staffing
3 requirements and the rules and regulations to be issued by the DOH under this Act.
4
5 **Sec. 12. *Repealing Clause.*** - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, letters of
6 instruction, rules, and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are
7 hereby repealed or modified accordingly.
8
9 **Sec. 13. *Separability Clause.*** - If for any reason any provision of this Act is declared
10 unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force
11 and effect.
12
13 **Sec.14. *Effectivity.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the
14 Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.
15
16 *Approved,*