

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7956



Introduced by **ANG PROBINSYANO**
Party-List Representative Alfred Delos Santos

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article II, Section 15 of the 1987 Constitution mandates the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people and to instill health consciousness among them. In furtherance of this constitutional policy, Republic Act No. 11036, otherwise known as the “Mental Health Act,” was enacted to establish a comprehensive national mental health policy framework, integrate mental health into basic health services, protect the rights of persons with mental health needs, and strengthen governance, research, and service delivery mechanisms.

Notwithstanding the enactment of RA 11036, significant service delivery gaps remain at the community level, particularly in crisis intervention, early detection, and immediate response to mental health emergencies. Access to timely psychosocial support continues to be uneven, especially in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas, where mental health professionals and facilities are limited.

This proposed measure seeks to operationalize and strengthen the implementation of RA 11036 by institutionalizing: (1) a 24/7 National Mental Health Emergency Hotline with regional call centers to provide immediate crisis response, referral, and coordination services; and (2) a community-based mental health support system composed of trained Barangay Mental Health Workers and designated City/Municipal Mental Health Professionals to ensure localized monitoring, early intervention, and public awareness.

The proposed hotline shall function as a centralized crisis response and referral mechanism integrated with existing health systems under the Department of Health (DOH), without supplanting established emergency response services. The barangay-level mental health workers shall operate within the local government health structure pursuant to the Local Government

Code and in coordination with DOH guidelines, serving as frontline community liaisons for mental health awareness, referral, and support.

By strengthening crisis intervention infrastructure and institutionalizing community-based mental health support mechanisms, this measure reinforces the objectives of RA 11036, enhances accessibility of services, and advances the State's constitutional obligation to protect the mental well-being of all Filipinos.

It is for the foregoing premises that the approval of this Bill is earnestly sought.



ALFRED C. DELOS SANTOS
Representative, Ang Probinsyano Partylist

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AN ACT
STRENGTHENING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AT THE LEVEL OF THE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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 “*Accessible Mental Health Services Act*.”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the state to protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them. It is likewise the policy of the State to ensure that mental health is prioritized as an equally important component of overall health of a person. To this end, the State shall endeavor to make mental health services more accessible by bringing it as close to every Filipino family in the barangay level. The State shall also provide avenues to Filipinos who need immediate medical assistance with regard to their mental health conditions.

SECTION 3. Definition. – For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall mean:

a) “*Mental health*” refers to a state of well-being in which the individual realizes one’s own abilities and potentials, copes adequately with the normal stresses of life, displays resilience in the face of extreme life events, works productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a positive contribution to the community;

b) “*Mental health condition*” refers to a neurologic or psychiatric condition characterized by the existence of a recognizable, clinically-significant disturbance in an individual’s cognition, emotional regulation, or behavior that

reflect a genetic or acquired dysfunction in the neurobiological, psychosocial, or developmental processes underlying mental functioning. The determination of neurologic and psychiatric conditions shall be based on scientifically-accepted medical nomenclature and best available scientific and medical evidence;

c) “*Mental health professional*” refers to a medical doctor, psychologist, nurse, social worker, or any other appropriately-trained and qualified person with specific skills relevant to the provision of mental health services;

d) “*Mental health services*” refer to psychological, psychiatric or neurologic activities and programs along the whole range of the mental health support services including promotion, prevention, treatment and aftercare, which are provided by mental health facilities and mental health professionals;

e) “*Mental health worker*” refers to a trained person, volunteer, or advocate engaged in mental health promotion, providing support services under the supervision of a mental health professional;

f) “*Psychiatric or neurologic emergency*” refers to a condition presenting a serious and immediate threat to the health and well-being of a service user or any other person affected by a mental health condition, or to the health and well-being of others, requiring immediate medical intervention; and

g) “*Psychological first aid*” refers to a practical support process for survivors that includes assessing their needs and concerns and helping them address these by connecting them to the right information, relevant services, and applicable social support.

h) “*Psychosocial problem*” refers to a condition that indicates the existence of dysfunctions in a person’s behavior, thoughts and feelings brought about by sudden, extreme, prolonged or cumulative stressors in the physical or social environment.

SECTION 4. *City/ Municipal Mental Health Professional.* – There shall be at least one (1) city or municipal mental health professional posted in the city or municipal health center. He or she shall provide mental health services to residents of the city or municipality and supervise the barangay mental health workers assigned within the LGU’s territory.

He or she shall also lead the conduct of small discussion groups or forums within the community about mental health with the goal of breaking the misinformation and stigma around mental health and mental disorders. A report on the progress of the said program shall be submitted to the regional offices of DOH annually.

SECTION 5. *Barangay Mental Health Workers.* - LGU's, in coordination with the Department of Health and its instrumentalities, shall provide barangay health workers with training in basic mental health services, most especially psychological first aid.

The following shall be the main duties of a barangay mental health worker:

- a) regularly visit persons diagnosed as having a mental health condition residing in their barangay;
- b) assist persons with mental health conditions and their families in accessing mental health services in government hospitals;
- c) assist the mental health professional in the conduct of small discussion groups or forum within the community about mental health;
- d) assist persons who wish to consult with mental health professionals and connect them with mental health professionals or institutions providing mental health services; and
- e) other tasks that the city or municipal mental health professional may assign from time to time.

SECTION 6. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - The DOH, with the assistance of the relevant government agencies, shall provide for the implementing rules and regulations for this Act within six (6) months from its effectivity.

SECTION 7. *Appropriations.* - Such an amount may be necessary for the initial implementation of the provisions of this Act shall be drawn from the budget of the concerned agencies. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be regularly incorporated in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA).

SECTION 8. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision or part of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions or parts unaffected shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 9. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees or issuances, letters of instruction, administrative orders, rules, and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 10. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,