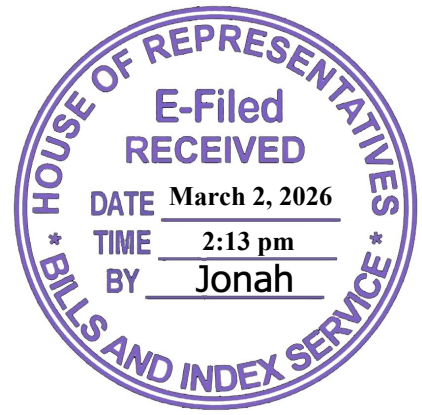


Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8197



Introduced by Hon. Florabel Co Yatco

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is becoming an aging society. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), there were over 9.2 million senior citizens (60 years old and above) in 2020, comprising 8.5% of the total population, and this number is projected to further increase in the coming decades.¹ As our population ages, the burden of chronic and degenerative diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular illnesses, dementia, and cancer continues to rise.

Under Republic Act No. 11223 or the Universal Health Care Act, the State guarantees equitable access to quality and affordable healthcare services.² Meanwhile, Republic Act No. 11350 created the National Commission of Senior Citizens (NCSC) to promote the welfare of older persons.³ However, despite these important laws, the country still lacks a dedicated, comprehensive, and specialized national referral center solely focused on geriatric health.

Bilang isang NANAY, hindi natin maaaring pabayaang ang ating mga lolo at lola. They are the pillars of our families and the keepers of our history. They deserve not only respect, but accessible and specialized medical care responsive to their unique needs.

This measure seeks to establish the Philippine Geriatric Center (PGC) as a national end-referral, training, and research institution for geriatric care, and to ensure the establishment of regional geriatric specialty centers nationwide, fully integrated within the Universal Health Care framework.

Through this bill, we affirm that caring for our elderly is not charity... it is a responsibility of a grateful nation.

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


HON. FLORABEL CO YATCO
Representative
NANAY Partylist

¹ Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020 Census of Population and Housing (2020 CPH) Population Counts Declared Official by the President, 2021.

² Republic Act No. 11223 (2019), "Universal Health Care Act."

³ Republic Act No. 11350 (2019), "National Commission of Senior Citizens Act."

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
H.B. No. 8197

Introduced by Hon. Florabel Co Yatco

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE GERIATRIC CENTER UNDER THE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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 “Philippine Geriatric Center (PGC) Act.”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of older persons and the aging population by ensuring accessible, affordable, and quality health services responsive to their unique medical, psychological, and social needs. Towards this end, the State shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to geriatric health development, and ensure that specialized services are integrated within the Universal Health Care (UHC) Framework.

SEC. 3. Philippine Geriatric Center. – The National Center for Geriatric Health–Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Center (NCGH-JRRMMC), located in San Miguel, Manila, is hereby renamed as the Philippine Geriatric Center (PGC) and established as a tertiary specialty hospital under the direct control and supervision of the Department of Health (DOH) to ensure the healthcare and quality of life of older persons and aging population: *Provided, That the existing hospital development plan, current bed capacity, and service capabilities, including organizational structure and staffing requirements, shall be updated and upgraded consistent with the expanded mandate under this Act: Provided, further, That the DOH shall formulate a National Geriatric Health Service Delivery Plan, which shall include the establishment and upgrading of at least one (1) regional geriatric specialty center per region within five (5) years from the effectivity of this Act to ensure equitable access to geriatric care, in coordination with local government units (LGUs) and existing DOH Hospitals.*

SEC. 4. Purposes and Objectives. – The PGC shall have the following purposes and objectives:

- (a) Equip, maintain, administer, and operate an integrated medical institution which shall specialize in geriatric health services;
- (b) Promote medical services to the elderly and scientific research relative to the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, care, rehabilitation, and relief of diseases of older people and the aging population,
- (c) Establish and maintain a National Geriatric Health Registry, which shall collect and update data on the health status, care needs, and service utilization of the elderly population;
- (d) Provide education and training for physicians, nurses, social workers, barangay health workers, and other allied medical and technical personnel in the practice and scientific implementation of health services to older people and the aging population;
- (e) Coordinate the various efforts and activities of other government agencies and

- LGUs towards a comprehensive and integrated approach to geriatric health and healthcare service delivery;
- (f) Develop and implement a Geriatric Human Resource Development Program that will provide scholarships, incentives, and continuing professional development for healthcare workers specializing in geriatrics, in coordination with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), including bonding requirements or service commitments as may be necessary;
 - (g) Ensure the integration of geriatric services within the UHC framework, including PhilHealth coverage for age-related conditions, long-term care, and preventive health services; and
 - (h) Coordinate with the National Commission of Senior Citizens (NCSC) to align geriatric health programs with social protection, welfare, and community-based support services for older persons.

SEC. 5. Referral System. – The PGC shall be the National End-Referral and Training Center for complicated geriatric cases and shall provide technical assistance to regional and local hospitals in developing geriatric health services.

SEC. 6. Appropriations. – An initial amount of Five Hundred Million Pesos (PhP 500,000,000) shall be appropriated for the upgrading, capacity-building, and initial operations of the PGC: *Provided*, That said funding shall be released in phases over a three-year period, subject to periodic performance evaluation and progress reports submitted to Congress: *Provided, further*, That the Secretary of Health shall immediately include in the Department's program the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the subsequent Annual General Appropriations Act.

Thereafter, the amount necessary for the continued operation of the hospital, including its upgrading and expansion of services, shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 7. Joint Congressional Oversight Committee. – There is hereby created a Joint Congressional Oversight Committee on Geriatric Health Services to oversee, monitor, and evaluate the implementation of the provisions of this Act.

It shall be composed of ten (10) members: five (5) members from the Senate, to be appointed by the Senate President, at least one (1) of whom shall be from the minority, and must include the Chairpersons of the Committees on Health and Demography; Finance; and Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development; and five (5) members from the House of Representatives, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House, at least one (1) of whom shall be from the minority, and must include the Chairpersons of the Committees on Health; Appropriations; and Senior Citizens.

The Joint Congressional Oversight Committee shall have the following powers and functions:

- (a) Review and evaluate the implementation of this Act, including compliance with its mandates, utilization of funds, the results of the periodic review conducted by the DOH under Section 8 hereof, and the performance of the Philippine Geriatric Center;
- (b) Conduct hearings, inspections, and consultations with the DOH, NCSC, LGUs, medical professionals, and other stakeholders;
- (c) Require the DOH and PGC to submit periodic reports, including an annual performance report and audited financial statements; and
- (d) Recommend remedial legislation, budgetary support, or policy actions to strengthen the delivery of geriatric health services nationwide.

SEC. 8. Periodic Review. – Within five (5) years from the effectivity of this Act, and every

five (5) years thereafter, the DOH shall conduct a comprehensive review of the implementation of this Act and submit a report to Congress, including recommendations for legislative or policy amendments, which shall be transmitted and referred to the Joint Congressional Oversight Committee on Geriatric Health Services for appropriate action.

SEC. 9. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – The Department of Health shall, in consultation and coordination with appropriate government agencies such as the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), Civil Service Commission (CSC), NCSC, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), and other stakeholders, within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, promulgate the Implementing Rules and Regulations for the effective and efficient implementation of the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 10. Separability Clause. – If any part or provision of this Act is held unconstitutional or invalid, the remainder thereof not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 11. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly: *Provided*, That nothing in this act shall be construed to repeal or diminish the mandates of Republic Act No. 11223, or the Universal Health Care Act, and Republic Act No. 11350, or the National Commission of Senior Citizens Act.

SEC. 12. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following the completion of its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,