



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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **8551**



Introduced by **Representative GIRLIE E. VELOSO**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Constitution mandates the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people and to adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development. It further directs the State to make essential goods, health, and social services available to all at affordable cost, with priority for the underprivileged, the sick, the elderly, women, and children. Republic Act No. 11223, or the Universal Health Care Act, reinforces this constitutional mandate by ensuring that all Filipinos are guaranteed equitable access to quality and affordable health care goods and services and are protected against financial risk. Consistent with these policies, Congress has previously acted to expand the capacity of the Negros Oriental Provincial Hospital (NOPH), recognizing its vital role in the province's public health system.^{1,2}

The Negros Oriental Provincial Hospital is the principal government referral facility located in Dumaguete City, serving the population of Negros Oriental and, in practice, patients from nearby areas, including Siquijor. While the hospital has achieved Level II status, indicating departmentalized services and higher general hospital capability, it continues to operate beyond its accredited capacity. Reports indicate that the hospital attends to approximately four hundred to five hundred patients daily and is not permitted to turn patients away. During peak illness seasons, occupancy has reportedly exceeded six hundred patients, resulting in patients being accommodated in hallways. Such overcrowding conditions strain infection control measures, compromise patient safety, and undermine the quality of care delivered by already overextended health personnel.^{3,4}

A critical example of capacity strain is the delivery of renal care services. The hospital has been operating with a limited number of dialysis machines, while hundreds of patients remain on waiting

¹ 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, Art. II, Sec. 15; Art. XIII, Secs. 11–13.

<https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/constitutions/1987-constitution/>

² Republic Act No. 11223 (Universal Health Care Act).

https://lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra2019/ra_11223_2019.html

³ Philippine News Agency. NOPH attends 400–500 patients daily; overcrowding strains capacity.

<https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1255139>

⁴ Philippine Information Agency. Hospital congestion and expansion needs in Negros Oriental.

<https://pia.gov.ph/news/negros-oriental-pushes-forward-with-new-medical-city-to-expand-free-healthcare/>

lists for life-sustaining treatment. This situation illustrates the broader service gap confronting the province: the increasing volume and complexity of cases referred to NOPH have outpaced its bed capacity, infrastructure, equipment, and staffing resources. As a result, the hospital functions beyond its formal classification, underscoring the need for a structural upgrade and stronger national government support.^{5,6}

This measure seeks to address these gaps by renationalizing the Negros Oriental Provincial Hospital and placing it under the Department of Health in order to strengthen governance, financing, and long-term service sustainability. It increases the authorized bed capacity from two hundred fifty to five hundred beds to better reflect actual service demand and upgrades the hospital to Level III capability while expanding specialty service capabilities necessary for advanced care and referral-hub functions. These reforms are consistent with the national policy of universal health care and the establishment of an integrated health system.

Upgrading the hospital into a DOH-managed Level III facility with expanded bed capacity and specialty service capability will decongest an overburdened referral hospital and reduce unsafe overcrowding conditions. It will improve access to advanced services, particularly for high-burden health needs such as renal care and dialysis, trauma and emergency care, critical care, and other specialty services responsive to regional demand. The measure will strengthen the province's role within an integrated referral network, reducing avoidable transfers and delays in receiving definitive care, and will advance the constitutional and statutory commitment to accessible, affordable, and quality health care, especially for indigent and vulnerable patients who rely on public hospitals as their primary safety net.

In view of persistent congestion, increasing service demand, and the constitutional and statutory imperative to ensure accessible and quality health services, the immediate enactment of this measure is earnestly sought.


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⁵ Philippine News Agency. Dialysis demand rises; limited machines at NOPH.
<https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1209363>

⁶ Dumaguete.com. Negros Oriental Provincial Hospital as primary referral facility.
<https://dumaguete.com/negros-oriental-provincial-hospital/>



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AN ACT
RENATIONALIZING AND UPGRADING THE NEGROS ORIENTAL
PROVINCIAL HOSPITAL IN DUMAGUETE CITY, PROVINCE OF NEGROS
ORIENTAL, PLACING IT UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (DOH),
CONVERTING IT INTO A FIVE HUNDRED (500)-BED CAPACITY LEVEL III
HOSPITAL TO BE KNOWN AS THE NEGROS ORIENTAL MEDICAL CENTER,
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

1 **SECTION 1. Renationalization and Conversion.** — The Negros Oriental Provincial
2 Hospital in Dumaguete City, Province of Negros Oriental, is hereby renationalized and placed
3 under the full ownership, management, administration, supervision, and control of the
4 Department of Health (DOH).

5 Upon effectivity of this Act, the Hospital shall be renamed as the Negros Oriental Medical
6 Center and upgraded to Level III capability, consistent with Department of Health licensing
7 standards.

8 **SECTION 2. Increase in Bed Capacity and Upgrade of Service Capability.** — The
9 authorized bed capacity of the Hospital is hereby increased from two hundred fifty (250) to five
10 hundred (500) beds.

11 The Department of Health (DOH) shall immediately undertake the upgrading of the
12 Hospital to Level III capability and implement the phased expansion and upgrading necessary to
13 meet such capability, including:

14 (a) infrastructure and facilities;

- (b) diagnostic and therapeutic equipment;
- (c) specialty and subspecialty clinical services;
- (d) intensive and critical care capability; and
- (e) human resource complement.

The upgrading and increase in bed capacity shall be implemented in accordance with a Hospital Development Plan to be prepared by the DOH and consistent with the licensing standards and regulatory requirements of the Health Facilities and Services Regulatory Bureau (HFSRB) of the DOH.

SECTION 3. Role in the Health Service Delivery Network. — The Negros Oriental Medical Center shall serve as a referral hospital for Negros Oriental, Siquijor, and adjacent areas, strengthening the health service delivery network pursuant to Republic Act No. 11223, otherwise known as the Universal Health Care Act.

SECTION 4. Specialty Service Capabilities. — To ensure access to advanced medical care and strengthen services already being delivered, the Hospital shall expand and maintain specialty and subspecialty service capabilities responsive to regional health needs, which may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) trauma, emergency, and critical care services;
- (b) advanced surgical and anesthesia services;
- (c) cardiovascular and respiratory diagnostic and treatment services;
- (d) renal care and dialysis services;
- (e) maternal, neonatal, pediatric, and neonatal intensive care services;
- (f) oncology diagnostic and support services;
- (g) infectious disease management and isolation capability;
- (h) rehabilitation and physical medicine services; and
- (i) other specialty and subspecialty services as may be determined by the DOH.

SECTION 5. PhilHealth Coordination. — The Department of Health shall coordinate with the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) to ensure that the Negros Oriental Medical Center is appropriately accredited and that its upgraded service capability and increased bed capacity are reflected in the corresponding case rates, reimbursement mechanisms, and benefit packages under the National Health Insurance Program.

SECTION 6. Personnel and Human Resources for Health. — All existing personnel of the Negros Oriental Provincial Hospital shall be retained. No officer or employee shall suffer diminution in rank, status, salary, or benefits by reason of the renationalization and upgrading of the Hospital.

The Department of Health (DOH), in coordination with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and the Civil Service Commission (CSC), shall create, fill, and fund the necessary plantilla positions and personnel complement required to support the increased bed

1 capacity, Level III capability, and expanded specialty services of the Negros Oriental Medical
2 Center.

3 Personnel adjustments shall be governed by applicable civil service laws, rules, and
4 regulations.

5 The Hospital may develop training and residency programs in coordination with accredited
6 training institutions and professional specialty societies.

7 **SECTION 7. Transfer of Assets and Properties.** — All lands, buildings, facilities,
8 equipment, records, and other assets necessary for the operation of the Hospital shall be transferred
9 to the DOH without cost, subject to existing laws and auditing rules. Where necessary, a usufruct
10 or similar agreement shall be executed for land ownership arrangements.

11 **SECTION 8. Transitional Support.** — Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of
12 this Act, the Department of Health and the Provincial Government of Negros Oriental shall
13 execute a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) governing the transfer of assets, personnel records,
14 liabilities, and ongoing contracts necessary for the renationalization and operational transition of
15 the Hospital.

16 To ensure uninterrupted delivery of health services during the transition period, the
17 Provincial Government of Negros Oriental may continue to provide financial, logistical, and
18 operational support until full national funding and staffing are in place.

19 **SECTION 9. Implementation Monitoring and Reporting.** — The Chief of Hospital
20 of the Negros Oriental Medical Center shall submit an annual report to the Department of Health
21 on the implementation of this Act, including the progress of the upgrading to Level III capability,
22 expansion of bed capacity, development of specialty services, and utilization of appropriated funds.

23 The Department of Health may consolidate these reports as part of its annual reporting on
24 health facility development.

25 **SECTION 10. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** — Within ninety (90) days from
26 the effectivity of this Act, the DOH, in consultation with the Provincial Government of Negros
27 Oriental, the DBM, CSC, PhilHealth, and other relevant stakeholders, shall promulgate the
28 implementing rules and regulations necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

29 **SECTION 11. Appropriations.** — The amount necessary for the initial implementation
30 of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the DOH.

31 Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued operation, maintenance, and
32 development of the Negros Oriental Medical Center shall be included in the annual General
33 Appropriations Act.

1 **SECTION 12. Separability Clause.** — If, for any reason, any section of this Act shall be
2 deemed unconstitutional or invalid, the other sections or provisions shall not be affected and shall
3 remain in force and in effect.

4 **SECTION 13. Repealing Clause.** — All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and
5 regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or
6 modified accordingly.

7 **SECTION 14. Effectivity Clause.** — This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days
8 from its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation,
9 whichever comes earlier.

10 Approved.