

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
QUEZON CITY

20th Congress
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **8664**



Introduced by: **REP. MARK CHOLO I. VIOLAGO**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article II, Section 15 of the 1987 Constitution states that – “The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.” The Local Government Code of 199, Section 16. General Welfare provides that – “Every local government unit shall exercise the powers expressly granted, those necessarily implied therefrom, as well as powers necessary, appropriate, or incidental for its efficient and effective governance, and those which are essential to the promotion of the general welfare. Within their respective territorial jurisdictions, local government units shall ensure and support, among other things, the preservation and enrichment of culture, **promote health** and safety, enhance the right of the people to a balanced ecology, encourage and support the development of appropriate and self-reliant scientific and technological capabilities, improve public morals, enhance economic prosperity and social justice, promote full employment among their residents, maintain peace and order, and preserve the comfort and convenience of their inhabitants.”

Mental health is a fundamental component of overall well-being and national development. In the Philippines, recent data reveal alarming trends: depression among youth has more than doubled in less than a decade, anxiety disorders are rising, and suicide cases continue to increase, particularly among adolescents and young adults. Despite these realities, access to mental health services remains severely limited. The country has only about one psychiatrist for every 200,000 Filipinos, far below the World Health Organization’s recommended ratio of one per 10,000.

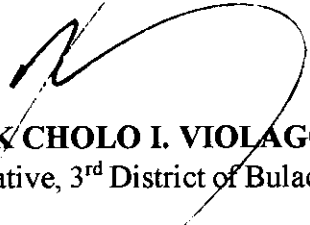
The passage of Republic Act No. 11036, otherwise known as the Mental Health Act, was a landmark step in recognizing mental health as a public health priority. However, implementation has been uneven, with services concentrated in urban centers such as Metro Manila, leaving rural municipalities underserved. Stigma, cultural barriers, and lack of resources further prevent individuals from seeking timely help.

Establishing mental health units in every municipality will ensure that services are accessible, community-based, and integrated into primary health care. These units will provide

early detection, counseling, crisis intervention, and referral systems, while also conducting awareness campaigns to reduce stigma. By decentralizing mental health care, we empower local governments to respond directly to the needs of their constituents.

This measure is not only a health initiative but also a social and economic investment. Untreated mental health conditions contribute to lost productivity, school dropouts, family breakdowns, and increased health care costs. By strengthening municipal-level services, we safeguard the well-being of our people, build resilience in communities, and uphold the constitutional mandate to promote the health of all Filipinos.

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



MARK CHOLO I. VIOLAGO
Representative, 3rd District of Bulacan

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF A MENTAL HEALTH OFFICER IN
EVERY CITY AND MUNICIPALITY IN THE PHILIPPINES

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 "Mental Health Officer Act of 2026".

Sec. 2. Declaration of Policy. — It is the declared policy of the State that "it shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them". Toward this end, the mental health of the citizens should be a primordial consideration of all local government units.

Sec. 3. Program for the Employment of Mental Health Officers and Role of Local Government Units. — The local government unit shall secure the assistance of the Department of Health in recruiting, selecting and in the training of the Mental Health Officer (MHO) employed by the LGUs to ensure their capability in addressing the mental health concerns of cities and municipalities.

The DOH shall issue the necessary guidelines in setting up the qualifications of the MHO to be deployed in the cities and municipalities and the module of relevant training of these MHOs.

Sec. 4. Stipend. — MHOs employed under the program shall be entitled to a monthly stipend preferably equal to salary grade 15, consistent with the mandatory minimum entry-level pay of employees in the government.

Sec. 5. Duties. — MHOs under this program shall be required to submit an annual report on the status of the mental health situation in their respective cities and municipalities including suggestions and recommendations of similar matters that may be of significance to the LGUs.

Sec. 6. Appropriations. — The funding requirements needed for the 4 implementation of this Act by local government units may be charged against their local funds.

Sec. 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR). — Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) in coordination with the Departments of Health (DOH) and Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) shall formulate the implementing rules and regulations within thirty (30) days after effectivity of this Act.

Sec. 8. Separability Clause. — If any provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not so declared shall remain in force and effect.

Sec. 9. Repealing Cause. — All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, administrative orders, rules and regulations, issuances, or parts thereof contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

Sec. 10. Effectivity. — Notwithstanding the non-issuance of the IRR, this Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,