

TWENTIETH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HOUSE BILL NO. **8811**

Introduced by Rep. CARMELO G. LAZATIN, JR.

AN ACT

STRENGTHENING THE PROMOTION OF BREASTFEEDING UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7600, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10028, BY REQUIRING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LACTATION (BREASTFEEDING) STATIONS IN RURAL HEALTH UNITS AND BARANGAY HEALTH STATIONS/CENTERS, AND PROVIDING FOR DOH-STANDARD HUMAN MILK BANKS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Breastmilk is considered the ideal food for infants because it contains antibodies that help protect children against illnesses. Breastfed children perform better on intelligence tests, are less likely to be overweight or obese and less prone to diabetes later in life.¹

However, based on UNICEF's data, less than half (48%) of all newborns globally, are put to the breast within an hour of birth, leaving many newborns without timely initiation of breastfeeding and early mother-infant contact.²

In the Philippines, Republic Act No. 7600, otherwise known as the "Rooming-In and Breast-Feeding Act of 1992," adopted rooming-in and breastfeeding as a national policy and seeks to enable mother-infant bonding immediately after birth. Republic Act No. 10028, otherwise known as the "Expanded Breastfeeding Promotion Act of 2009," amended Republic Act No. 7600 and mandates the establishment of lactation stations in all health and non-health facilities, establishments, or institutions, subject to exemptions where the establishment of lactation stations is not feasible or necessary due to the peculiar circumstances of the workplace or public place.

Republic Act No. 10028 further provides that health institutions adopting rooming-in and breastfeeding shall provide equipment, facilities, and supplies for breastmilk collection, storage,

¹ Breastfeeding. Available on https://www.who.int/health-topics/breastfeeding#tab=tab_1

² Too few children benefit from recommended breastfeeding practices. Available on <https://data.unicef.org/topic/nutrition/breastfeeding/>

and utilization, with standards defined by the Department of Health (DOH), and that health institutions are encouraged to set up milk banks for the storage of donated breastmilk that has undergone pasteurization.

Several malls and NAIA terminals, as well as local government units such as Angeles City, Bacolod City, Naga City, Kalinga, Calapan City, Baras (Rizal), and Luna (La Union), among others, have established breastfeeding or lactation stations in compliance with Republic Act No. 10028.

Congress has likewise required lactation stations in other public-facing facilities. Under Republic Act No. 11311, land transport terminals, stations, stops, rest areas, and RORO terminals must establish at least one (1) lactation station separate from sanitary facilities, compliant with Republic Act No. 7600 as amended by Republic Act No. 10028 and its rules and regulations, with random ocular inspections conducted in coordination with the DOH.

Breastfeeding also helps mothers recover after childbirth, supports postpartum weight loss, and may lower the risk of breast or ovarian cancer.

Despite existing laws and initiatives, breastfeeding support remains uneven at the primary care level. Rural Health Units (RHUs) and Barangay Health Stations/Centers (BHS/BHC), as frontline community health facilities, should be equipped with private, clean, and accessible lactation stations that support breastfeeding and milk expression in accordance with DOH standards.

This proposed legislation aims to strengthen the implementation of Republic Act No. 7600, as amended by Republic Act No. 10028, by mandating the establishment of lactation (breastfeeding) stations and DOH-standard human milk bank services) in RHUs and BHS/BHCs.

This measure will help improve access to breastfeeding-friendly spaces and appropriate lactation support at the community level, and will help ensure the availability of safe, pasteurized donor human milk where clinically indicated and in accordance with DOH standards, particularly when lactating mothers are medically unable to breastfeed, temporarily unable to provide sufficient milk, or are experiencing breastfeeding challenges such as nipple soreness, improper latching, and engorgement.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


CARMELO G. LAZATIN, JR.



Republic of the Philippines

House of Representatives

Quezon City, Metro Manila

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AN ACT

STRENGTHENING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REPUBLIC ACT 7600, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10028, BY REQUIRING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LACTATION (BREASTFEEDING) STATIONS IN RURAL HEALTH UNITS AND BARANGAY HEALTH STATIONS/CENTERS, AND PROVIDING FOR DOH-STANDARD HUMAN MILK BANKS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

1 Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*RHU and Barangay Lactation*
2 *(Breastfeeding) Stations and Human Milk Banks Act*”

3 Section 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared a policy of the state to protect,
4 promote, and support breastfeeding and safe infant nutrition by ensuring availability of private,
5 clean, and accessible lactation (breastfeeding) stations in Rural Health Units (RHUs) and Barangay
6 Health Stations/Centers (BHS/BHCs), and by establishing standards-based, Department of Health
7 (DOH) accredited human milk banks to support vulnerable infants where clinically indicated.

8 Consistent with Republic Act No. 7600, as amended by Republic Act No. 10028, the DOH
9 shall define the standards for facilities, equipment, and supplies for breastmilk collection, storage,

1 and utilization, and shall issue standards for the safe collection, screening, processing,
2 pasteurization, storage, and distribution of donor human milk.

3 Section 3. *Establishment of Lactation (Breastfeeding) Stations.* – Lactation
4 (Breastfeeding) stations shall be established by all local government units in Rural Health Units
5 (RHUs) and Barangay Health Centers (BHS/BHCs) to provide private, clean, and accessible areas
6 conducive for nursing mothers to feed their children and to express milk.

7 Consistent with Republic Act No. 10028, lactation stations shall be adequately provided
8 with the necessary equipment and facilities, such as: lavatory for hand-washing, unless there is an
9 easily-accessible lavatory nearby; refrigeration or appropriate cooling facilities for storing
10 expressed breastmilk; electrical outlets for breast pumps; a small table; comfortable seats; and such
11 other items, the standards of which shall be defined by the DOH. The lactation station shall not be
12 located in the toilet. LGUs may provide additional suitable amenities (e.g., nursing pillows),
13 subject to DOH standards.

14 Section 4. *Establishment of Human Milk Banks.* – the Local Government Units shall
15 establish human milk banks in RHUs and BHS/BHCs: Provided, That no human milk bank shall
16 operate unless accredited or licensed by the DOH in accordance with standards issued pursuant to
17 Republic Act No. 7600, as amended by Republic Act No. 10028.

18
19 The DOH standards shall include, at a minimum: donor recruitment and informed consent;
20 donor screening protocols (including medical history screening and laboratory testing as medically
21 indicated); collection and handling; pasteurization; storage and cold-chain transport; quality
22 assurance and traceability; dispensing protocols; staff training; and adverse event reporting.

23
24 Donors shall undergo screening in accordance with DOH protocols. Any reference to
25 specific tests (e.g., HIV, Hepatitis B) shall be included in the IRR or DOH clinical standards to
26 ensure scientific currency.

27
28 The human milk banks shall ensure that collected milk is pasteurized, stored, transported,
29 and dispensed in accordance with DOH standards to eliminate harmful bacteria and viruses while
30 preserving nutritional benefits.

31
32 All donor and recipient information shall be kept confidential and handled in accordance
33 with applicable data privacy laws and DOH protocols.

34
35 Section 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The DOH and Department of the
36 Interior and Local Government (DILG), in consultation with concerned local government
37 units, and other stakeholders shall promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations
38 within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act.

39

1 Section 6. *Funding.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall
2 be charged against the funds of the respective LGUs. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary
3 for the maintenance and continued operation of lactation stations and DOH-accredited human milk
4 banks shall be included in the annual budget of each local government unit.
5

6 Section 7. *Separability Clause.* If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or
7 invalid, the other provision not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.
8

9 Section 8. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations, or parts
10 thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified
11 accordingly.
12

13 Section 9. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
14 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.
15

16 Approved,