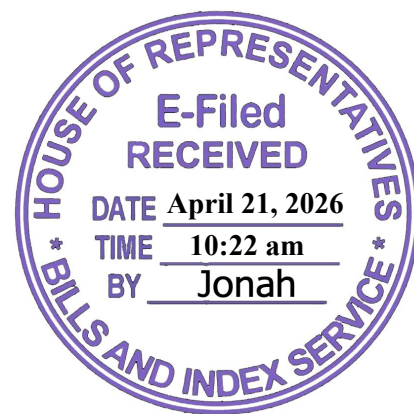




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session
House Bill No. **8898**



Introduced by Representatives Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, Yedda Marie K. Romualdez, Andrew Julian K. Romualdez and Jude A. Acidre

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING REGIONAL BARANGAY HEALTH WORKERS (BHW) ACADEMIES TO PROVIDE CERTIFICATION, CONTINUING EDUCATION, AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR BARANGAY HEALTH WORKERS, INSTITUTIONALIZING THEIR CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT, STRENGTHENING THEIR ROLE IN THE DELIVERY OF PRIMARY HEALTH CARE AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Barangay Health Workers (BHWs) have long been recognized as indispensable partners in the delivery of primary health care (PHC). They play a crucial role in identifying at-risk individuals, providing culturally appropriate interventions, and bridging the gap between communities and formal health institutions. In many areas where medical professionals are scarce, BHWs stand at the frontline of health promotion, disease prevention, and referral, making them vital contributors to the overall health system.

The Philippines was among the pioneering countries that embraced the Alma-Ata Declaration on Primary Health Care in 1979, which paved the way for the institutionalization of the BHW program in 1981. This commitment was further reinforced through Republic Act No. 7883, otherwise known as the “Barangay Health Workers’ Benefits and Incentives Act of 1995,” and more recently through the Universal Health Care Act of 2019. Despite these policy milestones, however, the full potential of BHWs has not yet been maximized.



Current challenges include the absence of standardized, continuing education and certification programs, limited opportunities for professional growth, and a lack of accreditation and employment protection mechanisms. While BHWs are at the frontline of service delivery, they often remain undertrained, underrecognized, and under-resourced, thereby undermining their ability to contribute effectively to health system resilience.

This bill, therefore, seeks to establish a formal institution—through regional academies—that will provide systematic and standardized continuing education, training, and certification of BHWs. By institutionalizing these mechanisms, the measure aims to:

1. Upgrade the skills and competencies of BHWs through structured training and capacity-building programs.
2. Ensure their accreditation and accountability as community health partners;
3. Strengthen their employment protection and entitlement to appropriate benefits; and
4. Secure sustainable funding support for their professional development and service delivery.

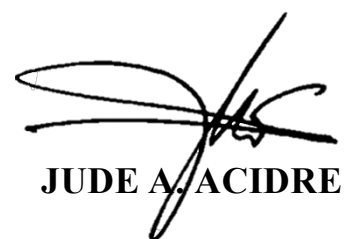
By empowering BHWs through education, certification, and institutional support, this measure advances the objectives of the State to make essential health care and social services accessible to all, consistent with the mandates of the Constitution, the Alma-Ata Declaration, and the Universal Health Care Act.

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


FERDINAND MARTIN G. ROMUALDEZ


YEDDA MARIE K. ROMUALDEZ


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JUDE A. ACIDRE



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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 “*Barangay Health Workers Academy Act.*”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of people and adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development, and pursuant thereto, it shall endeavor to make essential goods, healthcare and other social services available to all the people. In furtherance of this, the State shall uphold its duty to enhance the competence and capacity of Barangay Health Workers (BHWs), who serve as the primary health care frontliners at the community level, through



institutionalized education, training, and continuing professional development.

SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For the purposes of this Act, the following definitions shall apply:

- a. ***Academy*** refers to the Barangay Health Workers Academy established under this Act, which shall serve as the lead institution for training, certification, continuing education, and capacity development of BHWs.
- b. ***Capacity-Building*** refers to the process of developing and enhancing the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies of Barangay Health Workers (BHWs) through education, training, mentoring, and other learning interventions to enable them to effectively perform their roles in primary health care delivery.
- c. ***Certification*** refers to the formal recognition issued by a duly authorized government agency or institution, attesting that a BHW has successfully met the prescribed standards, qualifications, and competencies required for the performance of barangay health services.
- d. ***Continuing Education*** refers to structured and systematic learning activities beyond the initial training of BHWs, designed to update, maintain, and improve their professional knowledge and skills, in response to emerging health needs, policies, and technologies.

SECTION 4. *Coverage.* – The provisions of this Act shall apply to all Barangay Health Workers (BHWs), whether accredited or non-accredited, as defined under Republic Act No. 7883, otherwise known as the ‘Barangay Health Workers’ Benefits and Incentives Act of 1995. For the purposes of this Act, the term barangay health worker shall refer to a person who has undergone a training



program under any accredited government or non-government organization primarily to render health care services.

SECTION 5. *Establishment of the Barangay Health Workers Academy.* – This Act hereby establishes, under the administration and supervision of the Department of Health (DOH) and implementing agencies such as TESDA, CHED, SUCs and LGU, a system of Barangay Health Workers Academies, to be initially organized on a regional basis, and progressively expanded to provincial, city, and municipal levels subject to availability of funds. It serves as the lead institution for the certification, continuing education, and leadership training of Barangay Health Workers.

The institution shall coincide with the accreditation process of BHWs as a health workforce in accordance with Republic Act No. 7883 or otherwise known as the “Barangay Health Workers’ Benefits and Incentives Act of 1995”.

The Academy shall also be a component unit of the DOH and be headed by the Executive Director: *Provided*, That it shall be appointed by the Secretary of the Department of Health (DOH). Subsequently, organizational structure, number of positions and staff qualification, function and compensation shall be determined by the Department of Health (DOH), Civil Service Commission (CSC) and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

SECTION 6. *Powers and Function of the Academy.* – For continuing skill development of in-service Barangay Health Workers (BHWs) in the community, the Academy shall be mandated to perform the following functions;

- a. Develop standardized certification pathways for Barangay Health Workers (BHWs);
- b. Administer continuing education and re-skilling programs among



BHW, responsive to emerging health needs and trends in the community;

- c. Determine mandatory schedule for capacity-building of BHWs per municipality or city: *Provided*, that such schedule shall ensure that all barangays are covered and that all BHWs are afforded equitable access to said programs.
- d. Conduct leadership and management training to prepare BHWs for supervisory and community health leadership roles;
- e. Serve as the national repository of training modules, competency standards, and capacity development resources for BHWs;
- f. Collaborate with Barangay Council, Municipal/City Health Office and Local Health Board on the accreditation, benefits and incentives of Barangay Health Workers (BHWs);
- g. Establish linkages and partnerships with government agencies, academic institutions, civil society organizations, and international partners for training and resource sharing;
- h. Manage the budget allotted from the DOH's appropriated fund, which shall be necessary to carry out its objective, function, operation, improvement, programs and activities;
- i. Promulgate rules and regulations and exercise such other powers and functions as may be necessary to effectively carry out the purpose and objectives of this Act.

SECTION 7. *Governing Board.* – The Department of Health shall constitute a Board of Trustees and determine its composition and function. The Board shall formulate policies, approve the curriculum and certification standards, oversee program implementation, and exercise such powers as may be necessary and incidental to the attainment of the purposes of this Act; *Provided*, That its membership shall include representatives from the concerned national



implementing agencies, local accreditation bodies such as the Barangay Council, Municipal/City Health Office, and Local Health Board, as well as duly elected representatives of the BHW sector, with at least one representative from each province, highly urbanized city, and independent component city.

SECTION 8. *Appropriations.* — The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the Department of Health. Thereafter, the necessary sums for its continued operation and maintenance shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA) under the budget of the DOH.

SECTION 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).* – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DOH, in coordination with the DBM, CSC, TESDA, LGUs, and other concerned agencies and stakeholders, shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 10. *Separability Clause.* – If, for any reason, any part or provision of this Act shall be held unconstitutional or invalid, other parts of provisions thereof not affected shall thereby continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 11. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations, rules and regulations, and other issuances or parts thereof contrary to or inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 12. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.



Approved,