

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 9196

Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE AUDREY KAY T. ZUBIRI**

AN ACT
CREATING A DENTAL UNIT IN EVERY RURAL HEALTH UNIT UNDER THE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AS PART OF THE PRIMARY APPROACH IN THE
DELIVERY OF HEALTH SERVICES AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Health has become one of the foremost priorities of the Philippines. As mandated by the 1987 Philippine Constitution, the State is duty-bound to adopt a comprehensive approach to health development that ensures the availability of essential goods, health services, and other social services to all Filipinos at an affordable cost. In line with this constitutional mandate, the State enacted Republic Act No. 11223, otherwise known as the Universal Health Care (UHC) Act, in 2019.

¹The UHC aims to transform the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) into a strategic purchaser of health services, expand population coverage, and strengthen the delivery of comprehensive outpatient and primary care, including preventive and promotive services. However, oral health—an essential component of overall health and quality of life—continues to be significantly neglected, particularly in rural and geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas.

Findings from the 2018 National Oral Health Survey underscore this gap in access and utilization. Only 57.6 percent of Filipinos reported seeking dental care, and nearly half of them (48.7 percent) did so only when experiencing toothache, indicating a predominantly curative rather than preventive approach to oral healthcare. The survey further identified key barriers to

¹ <https://www.philhealth.gov.ph/circulars/2024/PC2024-0034.pdf>

dental consultation, including financial constraints (54.8 percent), fear or anxiety related to dental procedures (22.8 percent), and lack of time due to other responsibilities (14.3 percent)².

Despite the progressive intent of the UHC Act, the effective implementation of its oral healthcare objectives has also been hampered by limited resources, insufficient dental facilities at the primary care level, and persistent inequities in access to dental services and professionals³. These challenges highlight the urgent need for targeted interventions that bring essential oral healthcare closer to communities, especially those most underserved.

This proposed measure aims to address these gaps by establishing a dental unit in every rural health area. The creation of these dental units will ensure that oral healthcare services are accessible to all Filipinos, especially those in underserved communities. Through these facilities, individuals can receive regular oral health check-ups, preventive care, and early treatment without fear, financial burden, or the need to travel long distances. Ultimately, strengthening oral healthcare at the primary level will contribute significantly to improved public health outcomes.

Hence, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought to promote equitable access to oral healthcare and to further advance the State's commitment to universal and inclusive health services for all Filipinos.



AUDREY KAY T. ZUBIRI

Representative, 3rd District of Bukidnon

² <https://www.philhealth.gov.ph/circulars/2024/PC2024-0034.pdf>

³ <https://www.cebudentalimplants.com/content/nation-decay-root-causes-philippine-dental-health-emergency>

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9196

Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE AUDREY KAY T. ZUBIRI**

AN ACT
CREATING A DENTAL UNIT IN EVERY RURAL HEALTH UNIT UNDER THE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AS PART OF THE PRIMARY APPROACH IN THE
DELIVERY OF HEALTH SERVICES AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

1 **Section 1. Declaration of Policy.** - It is the policy of the State:

- 2 a. To pursue the Primary Health Care Approach in the delivery of health services and to
3 undertake the appropriate health human resource development for this policy; and
4 b. To promote preventive dental healthcare in the rural areas as part of the Primary Health Care
5 strategy.

6
7 **Sec. 2. Definition of Terms.** - As used in this Act, the following terms shall mean:

- 8
9 a. Rural Health Unit (also known as Main Health Center) shall be composed of a doctor, a
10 nurse and a midwife. Its function is to carry out the public health functions of the Department
11 of Health which includes both preventive and curative health care.
12 b. Dental Unit shall be composed of a public health dentist and a trained Barangay Health
13 Worker as a dental aide.

14
15 **Sec. 3. Creation of Dental Unit.** - As part of the Primary Health Care Approach, there
16 is hereby created a dental unit in every rural health unit under the supervision of the Department
17 of Health.

18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28

Sec. 4. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, the Department of Health shall promulgate the rules and regulations necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

Sec. 5. *Funding.* - The amount necessary for the purpose of this Act shall be funded from the current fiscal year's appropriation for the Department of Health (DOH). Thereafter, such amount as may be necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Approved,