



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

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 9324

Introduced by Representative John Geesnell “Baba” Yap

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to institutionalize the Bohol Island State University School of Medicine and appropriate funds therefor.

The BISU School of Medicine (BISU-SOM) grew out of BISU's expansion under Republic Act No. 9722, which converted the former Central Visayas State College of Agriculture, Forestry and Technology into Bohol Island State University and vested governance in a Board of Regents (BOR). Building on that charter, BISU expanded its course offerings and initiated the establishment of the BISU-SOM, in coordination with then Bohol First Legislative District Representative Edgar M. Chatto.

In 2023, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), in an *en banc* resolution, allowed the provisional operation of BISU-SOM and began opening its doors to offer the Doctor of Medicine program with the aim to address local physician shortages. Thus, the first public university-based medical school in Bohol was launched.

In just three years of operation, the BISU-SOM has enrolled sixty-eight aspiring physicians. Under its current employ are five support staff and forty-nine faculty members: five with permanent positions, twenty-nine on contracts of service, and fifteen guest lecturers. These numbers demonstrate Bohol's investment in a sustainable solution to its chronic shortage of medical professionals.

The SOM is more than an academic program — it is a strategic lifeline for the province: training home-grown doctors who are more likely to remain and serve in rural and underserved communities, strengthening local hospitals,

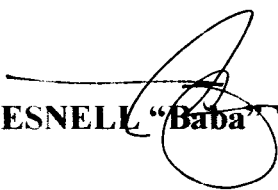
reducing costly patient transfers, and improving public-health resilience across Bohol. However, budget allocated by the BISU to the SOM is insufficient to cover essential personnel services and other maintenance and operating expenses, undermining faculty retention, clinical training capacity, and the quality of education. Without urgent additional funding and stronger institutional partnerships, the BISU-SOM's ability to deliver competent, community-committed physicians and long term health gains that Bohol needs will be seriously compromised.

This bill formally recognizes and stabilizes that operational program within the BISU institutional framework while preserving the BOR's statutory governance role. Further, it reduces the risk that medical education priorities will be crowded out by other institutional needs. A distinct appropriation improves fiscal transparency and accountability by simplifying tracking of personnel services, maintenance and other operating expenditures, facilitating audits by the Commission on Audit, and enabling the Department of Budget and Management to condition releases on compliance.

Institutionalizing BISU-SOM with a separate appropriation ensures modernization of facilities, faculty development, and compliance with national standards. It advances public policy goals: to strengthen regional health workforce capacity, expand access to medical education for underserved provinces, and align funding with regulatory oversight to protect students and public funds.

Finally, the bill balances continuity and protection for current partners and staff with *clear regulatory gates and fiscal safeguards*, ensuring that the SOM can mature into a CHED and DOH-compliant, financially sustainable medical school that serves Bohol and neighboring communities.

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


JOHN GEESNELL "Baba" YAP



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AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING THE BOHOL ISLAND STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. *Bohol Island State University School of Medicine.* – The Bohol Island State University School of Medicine (BISU-SOM) is hereby institutionalized as an academic and administrative unit of Bohol Island State University (BISU) with authority to offer the Doctor of Medicine program, including an Integrated Liberal Arts and Medicine Program and graduate courses related thereto.

SEC. 2. *General Mandate.* --- The BISU-SOM shall primarily provide advance instruction and professional training for the Doctor of Medicine program and related graduate programs, and relevant fields thereto. The instruction and training shall consist of basic science and clinical courses using a learner-

centered, competency-based and community-centered approach to develop a corps of professional physicians, strengthen the healthcare system of the country, and respond to the human resource development needs of the Province of Bohol and the Central Visayas Region.

The BISU-SOM shall undertake research and extension services and provide progressive leadership in the field of Medicine within the Province of Bohol and the Central Visayas Region. For this purpose, BISU-SOM may establish satellite branches and extension sites and programs upon the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 3. ***Governance.*** ---The BISU-SOM, as an institution within the BISU, shall continue to be governed by the Board of Regents of BISU, hereinafter referred to as the “BOR,” whose powers and functions are defined under Republic Act (RA) No. 9722 entitled “ *An Act Converting the Central Visayas State College of Agriculture, Forestry and Technology, its Units and Satellite Campuses in the City of Tagbilaran and in the Municipalities of Bilar, Candiijay, Clarin, Calape and Balilihan, All Located in the Province of Bohol to be Known as the Bohol Island State University (BISU) and Appropriating Funds Therefor.*”

Nothing in this Act shall be construed to limit, diminish, or otherwise alter the appointment, administrative, fiscal, or governance powers vested in the BOR under RA 9722 and RA 8292 or the “*Higher Education Modernization Act of*

1997,” or other applicable laws. The BOR retains its full authority to promulgate internal rules and policies for BISU-SOM consistent with the BISU charter, adopt organizational structures, promulgate internal policies, appoint or remove officials, and exercise oversight over all academic units of the University, including BISU SOM, subject only to the limitations expressly provided by law.

Confirmation, appointment, or removal of officers shall be carried out in accordance with applicable civil service rules and regulations, and other due process requirements.

SEC. 4. *The Dean.* --- The administration of BISU-SOM shall be vested in the Dean insofar as may be authorized by the BOR.

The Dean shall be appointed by the BOR, subject to BOR guidelines, qualifications, and standards, upon recommendation by the President of BISU after consultation with the constituents of BISU-SOM, and pursuant to the policies, standards, and guidelines of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). The Dean shall serve full-time with a term of three (3) years and may be reappointed to another term.

The powers and duties of the Dean, in addition to those specifically provided for in this Act, shall include those usually pertaining to the Office of the

Dean of similar state universities and colleges and those delegated by the President of BISU.

The salary of the Dean of BISU-SOM shall be in accordance with Republic Act No. 11466, otherwise known as the "*Salary Standardization Law of 2019*", and such other laws amendatory thereto, which may hereinafter be enacted, and shall be comparable to that being received by the Deans of similar educational institutions.

In case of vacancy in the Office of the Dean by reason of death, compulsory retirement, resignation, removal for cause, or incapacity of the Dean to perform the functions of the office, the BOR shall, upon the recommendation of the President of BISU, designate an Officer-in-Charge of the BISU-SOM, pending the appointment of a new Dean: *Provided*, That the Officer-in-Charge shall serve only during the unexpired portion of the term.

The Dean shall be assisted by a School Secretary, who shall be appointed by the BOR.

SEC 5. *The Faculty.* - The BOR shall, upon the recommendation of the President of BISU, appoint the faculty members of BISU-SOM: *Provided*, That no political belief, sex, gender, cultural or community affiliation or ethnic origin, nor religious opinion or affiliation shall be a matter of inquiry in the appointment

of faculty members of BISU-SOM: *Provided, further*, That said appointment shall be subject to the guidelines, qualifications, and standards set by the BOR: *Provided*, finally, That no member of the faculty shall teach for or against any particular religious denomination.

SEC. 6. *Scholarship Programs and Admission.* - The BISU-SOM shall provide scholarship and other learning support programs to assist poor but deserving students at BISU-SOM.

The BISU- SOM shall be eligible to participate in the Medical Scholarship and Return Service (MSRS) Program under RA No. 11509 or the “*Doktor Para sa Bayan Act*,” subject to CHED accreditation and compliance with MSRS rules. Scholarship disbursements shall follow CHED and MSRS implementing rules.

Students who have availed themselves of the scholarship program under RA 11509 shall render a return service in accordance with the said law. Students availing themselves of other nationally funded scholarship programs to complete the medicine degree program at BISU-SOM may be required to render a return service, depending on the signed contract between the student and BISU-SOM.

No student shall be denied admission to BISU-SOM by reason of sex, gender, religion, cultural or community affiliation, physical disability, ethnic origin, or any other forms of discrimination.

SEC. 7. *Academic Freedom.* --- The BISU-SOM shall exercise academic freedom and institutional autonomy, consistent with Paragraph 2, Section 5 of Article XIV of the Constitution.

SEC. 8. *Separate Fund.* — The BISU shall establish a separate fund and chart of accounts for BISU-SOM to record all receipts and expenditures related to BISU-SOM. The separate fund shall be established and administered in accordance with Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and Commission on Audit (COA) rules and regulations and shall be subject to DBM allotment procedures and COA audit. The separate fund shall be treated in a manner consistent with existing special fund practices under applicable laws and DBM and COA regulations.

SEC. 9. *Use of Funds.* — Funds appropriated under this Act shall be used exclusively for BISU-SOM purposes, including faculty and staff compensation and maintenance and other operating expenses, including clinical training support, laboratories, libraries, equipment, infrastructure, scholarships, and program development. Reprogramming or transfer of funds to other units strictly requires prior DBM approval.

SEC. 10. *Duty and Tax Exemption.* - The importation by BISU-SOM of medical books or publications, medical equipment or instruments which are for medical, laboratory or scientific purposes shall, upon certification by the CHED, be exempt from customs duties in accordance with the provisions of RA 10863, otherwise known as the "*Customs Modernization and Tariff Act.* "

All grants, bequests, endowments, donations, and contributions made to and used actually, directly, and exclusively for educational purposes by BISU-SOM, shall be exempt from donor's tax. The same shall be considered as allowable deduction from gross income for purposes of computing the taxable income of the donor in accordance with the provisions of the Tax Reform Act of 1997, as amended.

SEC. 11. *Assets, Liabilities, and Personnel.* – The University Treasurer shall inventory all appropriations, internally generated income, grants, donations, assets, liabilities, and obligations related to medical education and submit a transfer plan to DBM and COA within sixty (60) days from effectivity of this Act. Funds and assets shall be transferred to the separate BISU-SOM fund or chart of accounts provided under Section 8 of this Act, in accordance with DBM rules. Unexpended balances shall be treated per DBM regulations.

All parcels of land belonging to the government to be occupied by BISU-SOM shall be the property of BISU and titled under its name: *Provided, That* should BISU cease to exist or be abolished or should such aforementioned parcels of land be no longer needed by the BISU, the same shall revert to the LGUs where the parcel of land is located.

SEC. 12. ***Compliance with CHED Requirements.*** --- The provisions of this Act notwithstanding, the institutionalization of BISU-SOM shall become effective only upon the determination and declaration by CHED, based on the recommendation of the Department of Health (DOH) or a panel of experts on the subject that BISU-SOM has complied with the policies, standards, and guidelines of the CHED for the Doctor of Medicine program.

The authority of BISU-SOM to admit students into the Doctor of Medicine program, to conduct clinical instruction, and to confer the Doctor of Medicine degree shall be subject to CHED permit, recognition, or accreditation and to DOH requirements for clinical training and hospital affiliation.

The BOR, through the President and Dean, shall coordinate with CHED and DOH to secure all necessary permits, conditional recognitions, and clinical affiliation agreements for program operation.

SEC. 13. ***Transitional Recognition and Continuity.*** — The BISU-SOM operations as of effectivity of this Act is recognized for continuity purposes. All

existing students' enrollment, credits, clinical placements, and academic records shall remain valid.

SEC. 14. *Existing Operations, Structure and Personnel.* --- The current organizational structure of BISU-SOM is hereby recognized. The faculty, officers and administrators of BISU-SOM who are holding office as of the effectivity of this Act, whether plantilla, contractual, or temporary, shall continue in their positions and retain accrued rights and benefits for purposes of continuity of instruction, clinical training, and administration until new officers and administrators are appointed by the BOR.

The BOR shall, within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act, review the staffing plan and confirm in writing the appointments of the Dean and other key BISU-SOM officers, or create positions or fill any vacancies in accordance with civil service rules and other applicable laws, rules, and regulations. The BOR may constitute a search committee for the deanship if necessary.

Where temporary or acting appointments are necessary pending BOR action, the President of BISU may designate acting officers for a period not to exceed six (6) months. Any extension beyond this period shall require BOR approval and shall comply with CSC and Department of Budget (DBM) rules and regulations.

SEC. 15. *Recognition of Existing Contracts and MOAs.* — All existing memoranda of agreement, contracts, and other instruments relating to medical education and clinical training shall remain in full force and effect. Amendments, renewals, or terminations shall be by mutual agreement and in accordance with RA 12009 or the “*New Government Procurement Act.*”

SEC. 16. *Reporting, Monitoring, and Audit.* --- The BISU shall submit quarterly financial reports and annual audited financial statements to the BOR, DBM, CHED, DOH, COA, and the appropriate congressional oversight committees. Annual program performance reports shall include SOM enrollment, faculty complement, licensure examination performance, clinical placements, and other outcome indicators. CHED and DOH shall conduct periodic SOM program reviews and site visits. Release of funds may be conditioned on satisfactory compliance with CHED and DOH standards. The use of funds and assets shall be subject to COA audit.

SEC. 17. *Suppletory Application.* - The provisions of Republic Act No. 8292, otherwise known as the “*Higher Education Modernization Act of 1997,*” shall be an integral part of this Act.

SEC. 18. *Appropriation.* --- The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be charged against the appropriations of BISU. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued operation and

maintenance of BISU-SOM shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 19. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* — Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education shall, in coordination with the Secretary of Health, Secretary of Budget and Management, and the BOR of BISU, formulate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 20. *Separability Clause.* --- If any provision or part of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force or effect.

SEC. 21. *Repealing Clause.* --- All laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations, rules and regulations, and other issuances or parts thereof that are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby amended, modified, or repealed accordingly.

SEC. 22. *Effectivity.* --- This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,