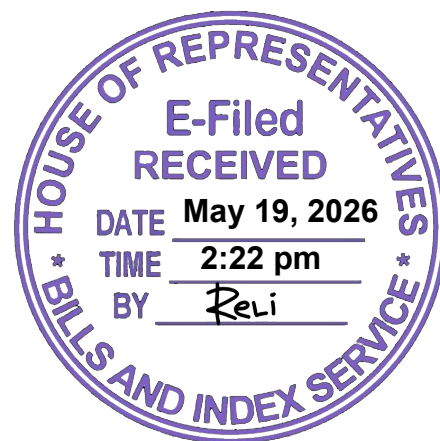


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **9327**



Introduced by Representative Ferdinand Alexander A. Marcos

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Constitution recognizes that the right to health extends beyond physical well-being. It necessarily encompasses mental and psychosocial health, which are equally essential to human dignity, productivity, and overall quality of life. Article XIII, Section 11 of the 1987 Constitution provides that:

"The State shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall endeavor to make essential goods, health and other social services available to all the people at affordable cost. There shall be priority for the needs of the underprivileged, sick, elderly, disabled, women, and children. The State shall endeavor to provide free medical care to paupers."

The urgency of strengthening mental health systems is evident not only in policy discourse, but in real-life experiences that underscore the consequences of unmet mental health needs. Across the country, there have been reported cases of individuals, including students, parents, and members of vulnerable sectors, who have succumbed to mental health struggles often shaped by complex interplay of financial hardship, social pressures, and emotional distress. These instances serve as a sobering reminder that behind every statistic is a human life marked by potential, relationships, and aspirations.

While the enactment of Republic Act No. 11036, or the “Mental Health Act,” marked a significant step towards a rights-based approach to mental health care and helped advance efforts to reduce stigma, substantial gaps in access to services persist. For many Filipinos, especially those in low- and middle-income households, the cost of sustained mental health care continues to be prohibitive, often resulting in delayed treatment, interrupted care, or complete non-availment of services. At the same time, the evolving social, economic, and environmental conditions of modern life continue to exert pressures that affect the mental health and well-being of individuals across all sectors of society. These realities underscore the urgent need to strengthen mental health care financing mechanisms and ensure that access to care is not determined by one’s financial capacity.

This proposed measure seeks to address these gaps by expanding mental health coverage under the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) through the establishment of a Mental Health Voucher System (MHVS). The proposed system introduces a targeted, pre-approved subsidy mechanism that enables eligible beneficiaries to access a defined set of mental health services and medications through accredited providers.

Under this measure, beneficiaries are entitled to tiered mental health benefit packages corresponding to their clinical needs, with guaranteed minimum coverage for consultations, therapy sessions, medications, and other necessary interventions. It likewise aims to strengthen data-driven governance through integrated monitoring systems and reinforces institutional coordination among the implementing agencies. Ultimately, this measure seeks to reduce the financial barriers that prevent Filipinos from seeking and sustaining mental health care, thereby improving health outcomes, enhancing productivity, and promoting a more responsive and inclusive health care system.

Under PhilHealth Circular No. 2023-0018, PhilHealth has taken an important step by launching the “Outpatient Mental Health Benefits Package” which provides

coverage for consultations, diagnostics, and psychosocial support for conditions such as depression, psychosis, epilepsy, dementia, and risks of self-harm. However, this program remains an administrative initiative, dependent on annual appropriations and subject to policy shifts. Legislation is therefore essential to institutionalize mental health care as a permanent statutory mandate. By enshrining this program into a law, Congress ensures its continuity beyond administrative discretion, secures stable and predictable funding, and embeds accountability mechanisms. This measure affirms the State's constitutional duty to guarantee accessible, affordable, and sustainable mental health services, thereby safeguarding the long-term well-being of all Filipinos.

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



FERDINAND ALEXANDER A. MARCOS

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **9327**

Introduced by Representative Ferdinand Alexander A. Marcos

AN ACT
EXPANDING MENTAL HEALTH COVERAGE UNDER THE PHILIPPINE HEALTH
INSURANCE CORPORATION BY ESTABLISHING A MENTAL HEALTH
VOUCHER SYSTEM, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

1 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “Mental Health
2 Voucher Act.”

3
4 **Sec. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – It is the declared policy of the State to protect
5 and promote the right to health of the people, including the right to mental health,
6 and to ensure that essential health services are accessible, affordable, and equitable
7 for all.

8 Towards this end, the State shall strengthen mental health care financing under
9 the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation, in support of Republic Act No. 11036,
10 otherwise known as the “Mental Health Act,” by expanding benefit coverage and
11 introducing a Mental Health Voucher System to promote early diagnosis, continuity of
12 care, and improved health outcomes.

13
14 **Sec. 3. Mental Health Voucher System.** – A Mental Health Voucher System
15 (MHVS), which shall serve as a financing mechanism to provide eligible members and
16 their qualified dependents with access to mental health services and medications

1 through pre-approved financial subsidies, is established under the Philippine Health
2 Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth).

3 Under the MHVS, PhilHealth shall issue mental health vouchers to qualified
4 beneficiaries. Each voucher represents a pre-approved financial subsidy that must be
5 used exclusively for mental health benefit packages and services covered under this
6 Act. The voucher is redeemable only through accredited mental health service
7 providers.

8 PhilHealth shall ensure that the MHVS is implemented in a manner that
9 promotes accessibility, continuity of care, and the efficient delivery of mental health
10 services.

11
12 **Sec. 4. *Qualifications.*** – Any duly registered member of PhilHealth, including
13 qualified dependents, who has been clinically diagnosed with a mental health condition
14 by a licensed physician, is eligible to apply for a mental health voucher.

15 Eligibility for the issuance of a voucher is determined based on a duly
16 accomplished mental health assessment certificate issued and signed by a licensed
17 physician, preferably a psychiatrist, and affiliated with an accredited government
18 hospital under the Department on Health. The certificate shall indicate the clinical
19 diagnosis of the patient, the recommended treatment plan, and the required services
20 and prescribed medications.

21
22 **Sec. 5. *Application and Evaluation.*** – The applicant shall submit the mental
23 health assessment certificate, together with such other documents as may be
24 required, through a prescribed application process. PhilHealth shall establish a
25 streamlined and accessible system for the receipt, verification, and evaluation of
26 applications, which may include digital or electronic platforms, consistent with the
27 principles of ease of access and administrative efficiency.

28
29 **Sec. 6. *Issuance and Validity.*** – Upon verification of eligibility and completeness
30 of requirements, PhilHealth shall issue a non-transferrable mental health voucher in
31 the name of the qualified beneficiary, indicating the applicable benefit package,
32 authorized services, and period of validity.

1 The voucher shall be valid for a period of not less than six (6) but not more
2 than twelve (12) months, or such other period as may be determined by PhilHealth,
3 consistent with the prescribed period and based on clinical assessment and treatment
4 requirements. The voucher is renewable annually, subject to re-evaluation and the
5 submission of an updated mental health assessment certificate.

6 PhilHealth shall adopt appropriate safeguards to ensure the authenticity of
7 certifications, prevent fraudulent claims, and used solely for their intended purpose,
8 without prejudice to the imposition of administrative, civil, or criminal liability under
9 existing laws.

10
11 **Sec. 7. Mental Health Packages.** – PhilHealth shall develop, adopt, and
12 periodically review tiered mental health benefit packages, which shall be responsive
13 to the varying levels of severity, clinical needs, and continuity of care requirements of
14 beneficiaries.

15 The benefit packages shall, at a minimum, include the following:

- 16 a. Basic package for outpatient and early-stage interventions, which entitles the
17 beneficiary to not less than six (6) to ten (10) psychiatric consultations per year,
18 at least six (6) therapy sessions, and a corresponding monthly medication
19 subsidy;
- 20 b. Standard package for moderate mental health conditions, which entitles the
21 beneficiary to not less than ten (10) to fifteen (15) psychiatric consultations, at
22 least twelve (12) therapy sessions, expanded medication coverage, and access
23 to psychological testing and other diagnostic services; and
- 24 c. Comprehensive package for severe or chronic mental health conditions, which
25 entitles the beneficiary to psychiatric consultations as may be determined by
26 PhilHealth, not less than twenty (20) therapy sessions, full or substantially
27 expanded medication support, and access to rehabilitation and other necessary
28 mental health services.

29 PhilHealth shall, in coordination with DOH, determine the specific scope,
30 frequency, and monetary value of services covered in each package in accordance
31 with prevailing clinical standards, cost assessments, and actuarial studies. Further,
32 PhilHealth shall structure the benefit packages to promote early diagnosis, ensure

1 continuity of care, and prevent the progression of mental health conditions, without
2 prejudice to the grant of additional benefits as may be warranted.

3
4 **Sec. 8. *Review and Adjustment.*** – PhilHealth is authorized to revise, expand,
5 or restructure the benefit packages, including the addition of services and
6 adjustments to coverage limits, as may be necessary to respond to emerging mental
7 health needs, advances in treatment, and financial sustainability of the program:
8 *Provided,* That such revisions shall not diminish the minimum entitlements
9 established under this Act.

10
11 **Sec. 9. *Funding Mechanism and Establishment of the Mental Health Fund Pool.***
12 – To ensure the sustainability and efficient administration of the program, there is
13 hereby established within PhilHealth, a dedicated Mental Health Fund Pool, which
14 shall be used exclusively for the financing of benefits, services, and administrative
15 requirements under the MHVS.

16 PhilHealth shall ensure that the allocation and utilization of the Mental Health
17 Fund Pool are consistent with actuarial soundness, fiscal sustainability, and the timely
18 delivery of benefits to qualified members and their dependents. For this purpose,
19 PhilHealth shall incorporate the funding requirements of the MHVS in its annual
20 budget proposals and shall adopt appropriate financial management and
21 accountability mechanisms.

22 The DOH and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) shall, in
23 coordination with PhilHealth, ensure the adequate and continuing funding of the
24 program, consistent with national health priorities and the objectives of this Act.

25 The implementation of the MHVS under this Act shall be funded from the
26 available funds of PhilHealth, such sums as may be appropriated annually under the
27 General Appropriations Act, and such other sources as may be identified or
28 authorized by law, including allocations from sin taxes and other earmarked health
29 revenues.

1 **Sec. 10. Reportorial Requirements.** – PhilHealth shall, in coordination with the
2 DOH, submit to the Congress of the Philippines an annual report on the
3 implementation of the MHVS within ninety (90) days from the end of each fiscal year.

4 The report shall include, among others, the number of beneficiaries served,
5 utilization rates of each benefit package, total expenditures, geographic distribution
6 of services, and such other relevant information as may be necessary to assess the
7 effectiveness, efficiency, and financial sustainability of the program.

8 PhilHealth shall likewise publish a summary of the report in its official website
9 to ensure transparency and public access to information, subject to existing laws on
10 data privacy and confidentiality.

11
12 **Sec. 11. Implementing Agencies.** – PhilHealth shall serve as the lead
13 implementing agency for the MHVS established under this Act and shall be primarily
14 responsible for its administration, financing, and overall management.

15 The DOH shall, in coordination with PhilHealth, establish and periodically
16 update the clinical, diagnostic, and treatment standards applicable for the
17 implementation of this Act, ensure the quality and appropriateness of mental health
18 services rendered by accredited providers, and assist in the formulation of policies
19 and guidelines.

20 The National Mental Health Council (NMHC) shall act as a coordinating and
21 advisory body in the implementation of this Act, particularly in ensuring alignment
22 with the National Mental Health Program, promoting inter-agency coordination, and
23 supporting the development of policies and strategies relating to mental health care
24 delivery, data management, and program evaluation.

25 PhilHealth, DOH and NMHC shall ensure close coordination in the development
26 of benefit packages, accreditation of mental health service providers, integration of
27 mental health data systems, monitoring of service delivery, and evaluation of
28 program outcomes, with due consideration to accessibility, quality of care, and
29 continuity of treatment.

30
31 **Sec. 12. Monitoring and Data Management.** – PhilHealth shall establish and
32 maintain a secure and integrated digital monitoring and data management system

1 to ensure the efficient processing of applications, accurate tracking of voucher
2 issuance and utilization, and the continuity of care of beneficiaries across accredited
3 service providers.

4 The system shall, at a minimum, maintain a centralized database of
5 beneficiaries and services availed, generate relevant data to support policy
6 development, budget planning, and program evaluation, and incorporate safeguards
7 to detect, prevent, and address fraud, abuse, and overutilization of benefits.
8 PhilHealth shall coordinate with the DOH and NMHC to promote interoperability and
9 alignment with existing national mental health information systems and data
10 governance frameworks.

11
12 **Sec. 13. *Data Privacy.*** – PhilHealth shall ensure that all data collected,
13 processed, and stored under this system are protected in accordance with Republic
14 Act No. 10173, otherwise known as the “Data Privacy Act of 2012,” and other
15 applicable laws, rules, and regulations. Likewise, PhilHealth shall adopt appropriate
16 administrative, technical, and organizational safeguards to preserve the
17 confidentiality, integrity, and security of personal and health information.

18
19 **Sec. 14. *Appropriations.*** – The amount necessary for the initial implementation
20 of this Act shall be charged against the current corporate operating budget of
21 PhilHealth. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued
22 implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual corporate operating budget
23 of PhilHealth and the General Appropriations Act.

24
25 **Sec. 15. *Implementing Rules and Regulations*** – Within ninety (90) days from
26 the effectivity of this Act, the President and Chief Executive Officer of PhilHealth, in
27 coordination with the Secretary of Health and other relevant agencies, shall
28 promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of
29 this Act.

1 **Sec. 16. *Separability Clause.*** – If any part or provision of this Act is held
2 unconstitutional, other provisions which are not affected shall continue to be in full
3 force and effect.

4
5 **Sec. 17. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, decrees, orders, issuances, rules and
6 regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are repealed or modified
7 accordingly.

8
9 **Sec. 18. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
10 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,