

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 11372



Introduced by **Representative AGATHA "AGAY" CRUZ**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Access to appropriate hospital care depends not only on the presence of a health facility, but also on whether that facility has the capacity, services, equipment, and personnel required to respond to the needs of the population it serves.

The 1987 Constitution directs the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people. Consistent with this mandate, the Universal Health Care Act seeks to ensure that all Filipinos have equitable access to quality and affordable health care services through an integrated and responsive health system.

Enacted in 2022, Republic Act No. 11720 established the Joni Villanueva General Hospital (JVGH) in the Municipality of Bocaue, Province of Bulacan, as a Level II general hospital under the direct control and supervision of the Department of Health (DOH).

In the years since its establishment under R.A. No. 11720, JVGH has experienced substantial growth in the utilization of its services. Its bed occupancy rate increased from 34.05% in 2023 to 125.97% in 2024 and 119.71% in 2025, and further reached 145.15% as of June 2026. Admissions rose from 656 in 2023 to 10,494 in 2025, while emergency room visits increased from 10,638 to 36,352 and outpatient visits from 26,551 to 60,144 during the same period.

This increasing utilization has placed corresponding pressure on the hospital's existing capacity. JVGH currently has a licensed capacity of 100 beds, while its implementing bed capacity as of 2026 already ranges from 120 to 150 beds. The sustained rise in admissions, emergency cases, and outpatient consultations supports the continued expansion not only of bed capacity, but also of hospital facilities, service capability, and human resources.

The hospital has already begun developing the institutional capacity required for a higher level of care. Its Hospital Development Plan identifies the progressive strengthening of critical care, specialty services, advanced diagnostics, health human

resources, infrastructure, and referral networks as part of its strategic direction toward Level III capability. The plan likewise envisions JVGH as a stronger frontline referral facility for critical cases and expressly includes the pursuit of legislation upgrading the hospital to Level III.

The need to upgrade JVGH must likewise be considered in relation to the size and continuing development of the population it serves. Based on the 2024 Census of Population of the Philippine Statistics Authority, Bulacan had a population of 3,876,806 as of 1 July 2024, while Central Luzon had a total population of 12,989,074. Bulacan was the most populous province in the region, accounting for about 29.8% of Central Luzon's population.

Central Luzon's population increased from 12,422,172 in 2020 to 12,989,074 in 2024, equivalent to an average annual population growth rate of 1.08%. The province's substantial population, together with continuing urbanization and economic and industrial development, reinforces the need for accessible and adequately distributed hospital facilities capable of providing specialized and subspecialized care.

This need is reflected in the Philippine Health Facility Development Plan (PHFDP) 2020–2040, which provides the national strategic framework for health-facility development based on population need, equitable access, and the coordinated expansion of infrastructure, equipment, and human resources for health. For Central Luzon, the PHFDP reported a supply of only 2,094 Level III hospital beds in 2019, against a projected requirement of 8,468 beds by 2025, indicating a gap of 6,374 beds between the reported baseline supply and projected 2025 need. The PHFDP further projects additional requirements of 1,417 Level III or apex beds by 2030, 1,596 by 2035, and 1,793 by 2040, bringing the cumulative Level III bed requirement for Central Luzon for 2025–2040 to 13,274 beds.

The regional shortfall is particularly relevant to Bulacan. JVGH is the province's DOH-retained hospital and presently provides Level II public hospital capability. At the tertiary level, the province has only one Level III hospital, with an authorized bed capacity of 300 beds. Based on the current provincial hospital inventory, Bulacan has 3,008 authorized hospital beds, of which 2,031 are in private facilities and 977 are in public hospitals. Public-sector capacity consists of 577 Level I beds, 100 Level II beds, and 300 Level III beds. The province has 141 intensive care unit beds, only 39 of which are in public hospitals, including 35 in the public Level III hospital. These figures illustrate the limited public tertiary and critical care capacity available to a province of nearly 3.9 million people.

The proposed upgrade of JVGH would therefore address more than the needs of a single institution. It would strengthen Bulacan's public referral network, expand access to higher-level care, and contribute to addressing the broader deficiency in Level III hospital capacity identified for Central Luzon. It is likewise consistent with the development

trajectory already set out in the JVGH Hospital Development Plan, which calls for the progressive expansion of infrastructure, equipment, specialty and critical-care services, personnel, and teaching and training capability necessary for Level III operations.

This bill therefore seeks to upgrade the Joni Villanueva General Hospital from a Level II to a Level III general hospital, provide for the corresponding upgrading of its professional health care services and facilities, authorize the necessary increase in its workforce, and allow future increases in bed capacity to be guided by its Hospital Development Plan, the Philippine Health Facility Development Plan, and applicable DOH standards.

Strengthening a public hospital requires both recognition of present demand and preparation for future need. In the case of JVGH, rising utilization demonstrates the immediate demand; the population and regional health-facility data establish the broader need; and the Hospital Development Plan provides a concrete path toward higher service capability. Upgrading JVGH to Level III will help ensure that the capacity of the public health system develops alongside the population it is meant to serve.

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



AGATHA "AGAY" CRUZ



Representative, Fifth Legislative District of Bulacan

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Introduced by **Representative AGATHA “AGAY” CRUZ**

AN ACT
UPGRADING THE JONI VILLANUEVA GENERAL HOSPITAL IN THE
MUNICIPALITY OF BOCAUE, PROVINCE OF BULACAN, INTO A LEVEL III
GENERAL HOSPITAL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

1 **Section 1.** The Joni Villanueva General Hospital (JVGH), located in the
2 Municipality of Bocaue, Province of Bulacan, is hereby upgraded from a Level II into a
3 Level III general hospital. The JVGH shall remain under the direct control and supervision
4 of the Department of Health (DOH).
5

6 **Section 2.** Any future increase in the authorized bed capacity of JVGH shall be
7 consistent with its approved Hospital Development Plan and the Philippine Health
8 Facility Development Plan.
9

10 **Section 3.** The existing professional health care services and facilities of the JVGH
11 shall be upgraded and expanded to conform with and be commensurate to its
12 classification and operation as a Level III general hospital and its authorized bed capacity
13 as provided in Section 2 of this Act.
14

15 **Section 4.** The existing workforce of the JVGH, including medical, nursing, allied
16 health, administrative, technical, and support personnel, shall be increased
17 correspondingly.
18

19 **Section 5.** The Secretary of Health shall, in consultation with the Medical Center
20 Chief of the JVGH, determine the additional positions necessary for the operation of the
21 hospital as a Level III general hospital, subject to applicable laws, rules, and regulations.
22

23 **Section 6.** The Secretary of Health shall immediately include in the Department’s
24 program the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the

1 annual General Appropriations Act.
2

3 **Section 7.** If any part or provision of this Act is held unconstitutional or invalid,
4 the remainder thereof not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.
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6 **Section 8.** All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, administrative orders,
7 rules and regulations, issuances, or parts thereof inconsistent with or contrary to the
8 provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.
9

10 **Section 9.** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the
11 *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.
12

13 *Approved,*