

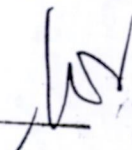
SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
*First Regular Session*



Senate  
Office of the Secretary

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SENATE  
S.B. No. 1157

RECORDED BY: 

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Introduced by Senator SONNY ANGARA

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AN ACT  
ESTABLISHING A MEDICAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM TO ENSURE THE  
AVAILABILITY OF DOCTORS IN EVERY PROVINCE NATIONWIDE

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In 2014, various groups—including the Coalition for Primary Care and the Philippine College of Physicians—warned that the country is in the “midst of a healthcare crisis,” born out of a lack or a maldistribution of doctors and healthcare professionals.

The country reportedly<sup>1</sup> only has 3.5 doctors for every 10,000 population—way below the ideal ratio of up to 1.5 doctors for every 1,000 population. At the same time, most doctors and medical specialists are concentrated in urban centers and larger municipalities, leaving far-flung communities largely unserved.

Such problems are only exacerbated by the lure of more lucrative opportunities abroad, leading to an exodus of medical professionals. For instance, according to data from the UP-College of Medicine, about 80 percent of its graduates leave the country to practice medicine abroad—a trend that appears to continuously be on the rise.

The effect of all these factors is evident in the lack of available medical doctors to serve our underprivileged countrymen, especially those in far-flung communities. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), some 58.2 percent of deaths recorded in 2013 were considered “unattended.” That is, close to 3 out of 5 Filipinos who passed away that year did so without seeing a doctor, nurse or any other allied health professional.

Reversing these worrisome trends is the main goal of this proposed measure. This bill intends to finance the medical schooling of a beneficiary who after completing his studies and passing the medical board will serve as a doctor in the public hospital in his home province. As such, this bill attempts to address the continuing need for doctors in our provincial public hospitals to perform the required medical services to our fellowmen.

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<sup>1</sup> See Geronimo, Jee. “Where are the health workers?” Uploaded on February 12, 2014. Accessible via <http://www.rappler.com/nation/50267-health-workforce-crisis>. Accessed on September 15, 2016

Recently, after visiting Cuba to study its widely lauded healthcare system, Health Secretary Rosell Ubial said that in order to replicate the successes of the Central American country, the Philippines needs to employ 35,000 more doctors. In view of this monumental and urgent need, the early passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



**SONNY ANGARA**



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

**SECTION 1. Declaration of Policy.** – It shall be the duty of the state to protect the welfare of its people including the well-being of every individual. By ensuring that every province nationwide shall have quality medical practitioners who will serve the government, access the health care in every province will significantly improve. The state shall counter the current trend of doctors of not serving the rural areas due to the less attractive prospects of medical practice threat, considering the huge expenses that a person will entail to study medicine.

**SEC. 2. Scholarship.** – There shall be established a scholarship program for medicine to be implemented by the University of the Philippines College of Medicine (UPCM).

a) The scholarship program shall accept at least one beneficiary from every province in the country, who passed the qualifying requirements of the UPCM. The number of beneficiaries per province shall depend on the number of medical doctors needed for each province as determined by the Department of Health (DOH).

b) The scholarship program shall include free tuition and other school fees, allowance for prescribed books, supplies and equipment, clothing and uniform housing accommodation, transportation and other related miscellaneous living allowances. This is extended to cover the duration of the beneficiary's medical board review.

1 c) In the event that the beneficiary fails to finish the course, he is obliged to pay  
2 the full amount of the scholarship that has already been given.

3  
4 d) The beneficiary shall be required to serve his provincial hospital for at least 5  
5 years upon passing the medical board examination. DOH shall provide for the  
6 necessary number of plantilla position to accommodate the new doctors in the  
7 provincial hospitals.

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9 **SEC. 3. Appropriations.** – UP and DOH shall include in their annual budget the funds  
10 necessary to implement the provisions of this Act.

11  
12 **SEC. 4. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – The Commission on Higher  
13 Education (CHED) shall in collaboration with UP and DOH shall issue the necessary  
14 rules and regulations for the for the purpose of implementing the provisions of this Act.

15  
16 **SEC. 5. Repealing Clause.** – All laws or parts of any law, order, rule and regulation or  
17 parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

18  
19 **SEC. 6. Effectivity Clause.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
20 publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general  
21 circulation.

*Approved,*