


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

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SENATE  
S.B. NO. 1394

RECEIVED BY: 

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Introduced by Senator Maria Lourdes Nancy S. Binay

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**AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM IN CULTURAL  
AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES BY INSTITUTIONALIZING THE  
TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT OF TRIBAL HEALTH WORKERS AND FOR  
OTHER PURPOSES**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

The 1987 Philippine Constitution, Article II, Sections 15 and 22, provides:


Section 15. The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.

Section 22. The State recognizes and promotes the rights of indigenous cultural communities within the framework of national unity and development.

Our indigenous cultural communities (ICCs) lack of access to basic services especially healthcare is still a continuing problem. This is mostly due to the fact that ICCs are settled in far-flung areas which make it difficult for them to avail of the benefits of modern medicine and healthcare and sequentially makes them susceptible to serious health problems and complications.

This proposal seeks to establish and institutionalize the training of tribal health workers. Their designation is intended to help complement the existing efforts of barangay health workers and the DOH in providing primary healthcare in their respective communities in order to prevent health problems and pursue effective community-based health services.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this measure is earnestly sought.

  
MARIA LOURDES NANCY S. BINAY  
Senator



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

1 **SECTION 1. Short Title** – This Act shall be known as the “Tribal Health Workers Act of  
2 2017.”  
3

4 **SECTION 2. Statement of Policy and Objectives** – The Philippine Constitution of 1987  
5 provides that the State shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health  
6 development which shall endeavor to make essential goods, health and other social services  
7 available to all the people at affordable cost. It is also the policy of the State to provide cheap  
8 and affordable quality medicine and medical services to citizens in far-flung areas and  
9 indigenous communities.  
10

11 **SECTION 3. Definition of Terms** – As used in this Act, the following words and phrases  
12 shall be defined as:  
13

14 (a) **Barangay Health Worker** – RA 7883 defines barangay health workers as a person  
15 who has undergone health care training programs in any accredited government or  
16 non-government organization and who voluntarily renders primary health care  
17 services in the community after having been accredited to function as such by the  
18 local health board in accordance with the guidelines promulgated by the Department  
19 of Health (DOH).  
20

21 (b) **Tribal Health Worker** – refers to members of ICC who have undergone health care  
22 training by either government or non-government organizations and renders  
23 voluntary health care in the tribal community.  
24

25 **SECTION 4. Tribal Health Workers** – all tribal communities which are located about ten  
26 kilometers (10km) from the barangay center are qualified to have tribal health workers  
27 (THW). The number of families in a community will determine the number of THW in that  
28 community – One (1) tribal health worker for every thirty (30) families.  
29



1 **SECTION 5. *Selection and Training of Tribal Health Workers*** – The tribal Chief shall  
2 appoint, in accordance with the traditions of the tribe, the tribal health worker and submit his  
3 name to the local health board who in turn shall register the appointed tribal health worker.  
4 The local health board will furnish a copy of the list of tribal health workers to the DOH  
5 which shall maintain a national list of tribal health workers.

6  
7 **SECTION 6. *Responsibilities of tribal health workers*** – The THW is responsible for  
8 providing primary health care to members of the tribes. He is also responsible for assisting, if  
9 needed, sick person/s to the nearest clinic or hospital.

10  
11 Since primary health care may use herbal medicines that are traditional to the tribe, the THW  
12 is mandated to establish an herbal garden in the community. The barangay LGU, the  
13 municipal LGU and the CENRO of the DENR are hereby required to provide assistance to  
14 the THW in establishing such herbal garden.

15  
16 **SECTION 7. *Benefits of Tribal Health Workers*** – Similar to the Barangay Health Workers  
17 who are provided with a number of benefits under RA 7883, the THW are granted the  
18 following incentives and benefits:

- 19
- 20 (a) Free health care insurance and hospitalization – the THW shall be provided with free  
21 PhilHealth Insurance. In addition, the THW shall be entitled to free hospitalization in  
22 case of work-related sickness or injury. The Department of Social Welfare and  
23 Development (DSWD) shall provide the insurance and bear the expenses of the  
24 hospitalization of the THW. The DSWD shall work closely with the local health  
25 boards in granting these benefits to the THW, particularly in identifying those who  
26 are entitled to such.
  - 27
  - 28 (b) Educational benefits – the THW is entitled to free tuition in public high schools and  
29 universities. Should the THW not be able to avail of this incentive, he is allowed to  
30 transfer this benefit to any one of his/her legitimate children. This benefit can only be  
31 availed by active THWs.
  - 32
  - 33 (c) Continuing training – the DOH shall be responsible for providing the continuing  
34 training for the THW on new and emerging primary health care management as well  
35 as new and emerging herbal medicines.
  - 36
  - 37 (d) Free legal services – the Public Attorneys' Office shall provide free legal advice to  
38 THW if there are occasions that the latter needs one; provided, however, that the  
39 occasion arises from or in connection with the exercise of his duties and  
40 responsibilities as THW.

41  
42 **SECTION 8. *Rules and Regulations of this Act*** – the DOH, DSWD, DILG and DENR shall  
43 be responsible for the formulation of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of this  
44 Act which shall be formulated within one hundred eighty (180) days upon its approval.

45  
46 **SECTION 9. *Separability Clause*** – If any provisions of this Act is declared invalid, the  
47 remainder, or any provisions of this Act is not affected thereby shall remain in force and in  
48 effect.

1 **SECTION 10. *Repealing clause*** – All laws, executive orders, proclamations, and other  
2 presidential issuances which are inconsistent with this Act shall be deemed, amended or  
3 modified accordingly.

4  
5 **SECTION 11. *Effectivity*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in  
6 the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

7  
8 *Approved,*