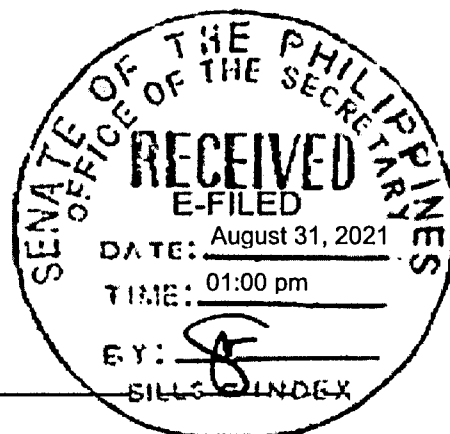


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Third Regular Session)

SENATE
S.B. No. 2371



Introduced by Senators RICHARD J. GORDON and SONNY ANGARA

AN ACT
GRANTING CONTINUING COVID-19 BENEFITS TO PUBLIC AND PRIVATE
HEALTH WORKERS DURING THE PERIOD OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC,
PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

As the COVID-19 pandemic still rages across the Philippines, our healthcare workers and other staff serving in our medical institutions continue fighting in the frontlines against the virus. Faced with long hours, immense fatigue and difficult working conditions, our health workers manage to provide care and comfort to COVID-19 patients and more.

In recognition of their invaluable role, Congress acted swiftly to include several benefits for our health workers under Republic Act No. 11494 or the Bayanihan to Recover as One Act ("Bayanihan 2"), which include:

- P15,000 each for health workers who contract mild or moderate COVID-19; P100,000 for severe or critical cases; and in case of death, the amount of P1 million to the heirs;
- Monthly special risk allowance for all public and private health workers directly catering to or in contact with COVID-19 patients;
- Actual hazard duty pay for all health workers serving in the front line; and,
- Life insurance, accommodation, transportation and meals to all public and private health workers.

While the aforementioned law lapsed last June 30, 2021, provisions were put in place to ensure that these benefits will endure so long as the declaration of a

national emergency remained in place. But due to differing interpretations of these provisions within the bureaucracy, many healthcare workers have continued to serve in the frontlines without receiving the benefits that was rightly due them. This has since prompted many of our healthcare workers to threaten mass walk-outs, which in turn would severely cripple the country's ongoing response to the pandemic.

To resolve this issue, we have elected to file this measure, which mandates the continuing grant of the aforementioned COVID-19 benefits to public and private health workers with retroactive application from July 2021. Again, we affirmed in this measure that these benefits shall remain available so long as the Presidential declaration of national public health emergency is in place.

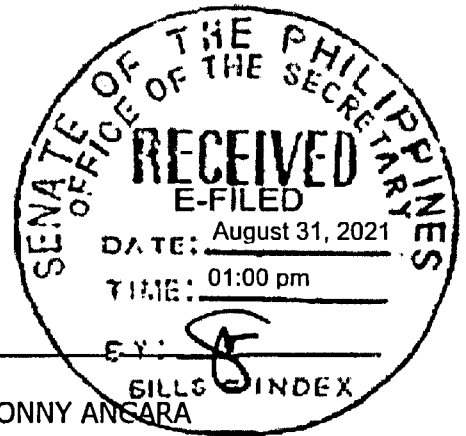
Given the immense importance of this measure, we urge its swift passage and enactment.


RICHARD J. GORDON


SONNY ANGARA

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
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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 and cited as "*COVID-19*
2 *Benefits for Health Workers Act of 2021.*"

3 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – The State shall instill health consciousness
4 among our people and recognizes that adequate support to our health workers, in
5 public and private sectors, is paramount to ensure continuous delivery of health
6 services especially during the existence of a national public health emergency.
7 Towards this end, it shall safeguard the welfare of our health workers and guarantee
8 that all benefits owing to them shall be provided to them with utmost efficiency.

9 **SEC. 3. Coverage.** – This Act shall apply to all public and private health
10 workers during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic, regardless of employment status.
11 Public and private health workers shall refer to medical, allied medical, and other
12 necessary personnel assigned in hospitals, healthcare facilities, laboratories, medical
13 or quarantine facilities, or vaccination sites and those administering medical
14 assistance. It also includes non-medical workers and outsourced personnel hired
15 under institutional or individual contract of service or job order basis who are similarly
16 exposed to COVID-19.

1 **SEC. 4. Continuing Grant of COVID-19 Benefits.** – The national
2 government shall provide the following benefits to covered individuals under Section
3 3 hereof:

4 (a) COVID-19 special risk allowance and active hazard duty pay for every month
5 served: *Provided*, That the special risk allowance and active hazard duty
6 pay shall be in addition to existing benefits being received by health workers
7 under existing laws;

8 (b) Provision of life insurance, accommodation, transportation, and meals,
9 regardless of the community quarantine status; and

10 (c) Provision of compensation to those who have contracted COVID-19 in the
11 line of duty, with the following amounts, upon submission of required
12 documents to support claims:

13 (1) In case of death of the covered individual, One million pesos
14 (P1,000,000) shall be provided to the heirs of the covered individuals;

15 (2) In case of sickness, for a severe or critical case, One hundred thousand
16 pesos (P100,000) shall be provided to the covered individuals; and

17 (3) In case of sickness, for a mild or moderate case, Fifteen thousand pesos
18 (P15,000) shall be provided to the covered individuals:

19 *Provided*, That the compensation provided herein shall be given to the
20 beneficiaries not later than three (3) months after the date of
21 confinement or death.

22 The provision of the foregoing benefits shall have retroactive application from
23 July 1, 2021 and shall remain in full force and effect during the state of national public
24 health emergency as declared by the President.

25 **SEC 5. Tax Exemption.** – The benefits received by covered workers under
26 this Act, during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic shall be exempt from income
27 tax.

28 **SEC. 6. Appropriations.** – The amount necessary for the implementation of
29 this Act shall be charged against the current year available appropriations of the

1 Department of Health. Thereafter, the amount necessary for its continuous
2 implementation shall be included in the Annual General Appropriations.

3 **SEC. 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within sixty (30) days
4 from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Health and the Department of
5 Budget and Management shall promulgate the Implementing Rules and Regulations
6 to carry out the provisions of this Act.

7 The non-promulgation of the rules and regulations provided under this section
8 shall not prevent the immediate implementation of this Act upon effectivity.

9 **SEC. 8. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, decrees, executive orders, executive
10 issuances or letters of instruction, rules and regulations or any part thereof
11 inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act are hereby deemed repealed,
12 amended or modified accordingly.

13 **SEC. 9. Separability Clause.** – If, for any reason or reasons, any part or
14 parts of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid by any competent court,
15 other sections or provision hereof not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force
16 and effect.

17 **SEC. 10. Effectivity Clause.** – This Act shall take effect immediately after its
18 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,