

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



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SENATE
S. No. 248

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator **PIA S. CAYETANO**

AN ACT
AUTHORIZING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (DOH) TO SET AND APPROVE
THE BED CAPACITY AND SERVICE CAPABILITY OF ALL DOH HOSPITALS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

As provided in Section 11, Article XIII of the Constitution, "[t]he 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." This is further supported by the enactment of Republic Act No. 11223 or the "*Universal Health Care Act*", which aims to "ensure that all Filipinos are guaranteed equitable access to quality and affordable health care".

One of the indicators to determine the accessibility of health care, specifically inpatient care, is the ratio of hospital beds to population. In the Philippines, which has a population of approximately 110 million,¹ the ratio is 1 hospital bed for every 1,000 people. This is way below the ideal ratio set by the World Health Organization of 3 beds for every 1,000 population (3:1000)². The shortage of hospital beds in the country became even more evident during the surge of COVID-19 cases during which some patients had to receive immediate care inside their vehicles in the hospital

¹ Commission on Population and Development. (n.d.). *POPCOM: At least 1.4 million will be added to the Philippine population in 2021*. <https://popcom.gov.ph/popcom-number-of-filipinos-in-2021-estimated-at-110-8-million-sizes-of-families-trending-lower-at-4-members/>

² Lacsamana, B. (2021, June 23). Burden on hospitals can be eased by community-based care, says experts. *Business World*. [https://www.bworldonline.com/health/2021/06/23/377332/burden-on-hospitals-can-be-eased-by-community-based-care-say-experts/#:~:text=Luke's%20Medical%20Center%20\(SLMC\),by%20SLMC's%20College%20of%20Medicine.](https://www.bworldonline.com/health/2021/06/23/377332/burden-on-hospitals-can-be-eased-by-community-based-care-say-experts/#:~:text=Luke's%20Medical%20Center%20(SLMC),by%20SLMC's%20College%20of%20Medicine.)

parking lots.³ Amidst the pandemic, DOH confirmed that big hospitals in Metro Manila and other areas in the country are overpopulated with non-COVID patients.⁴ One reason for this is that patients from other regions were seeking admission to NCR hospitals because of the lack of available beds in their areas. The total hospital bed utilization rate and its current thresholds are currently used as the main metric for the health system capacity in the country.⁵

In relation to this, the DOH developed the Philippine Health Facility Development Plan (PHFDP) 2020-2040 which aims to guide national and local government units in health infrastructure investment. The plan not only focuses on increasing the bed capacity of hospitals but also on investing in health human resources and sustained financing.⁶ The gap in our bed-to-population ratio must be addressed while considering other resource requirements such as adequate financing, human resources, and other operational needs.⁷

Currently, DOH increases the bed capacity of its hospital through legislation. Each bill has to go through the tedious legislative process which may take years. Allowing the DOH, in accordance with the PHFDP, to set and approve the bed capacity and service capability of DOH hospitals will be more efficient and effective, which is critical in addressing the gaps in our healthcare system.

This measure is long overdue. It is based on the Committee Report filed by the Committees on Health and Demography, and Finance in the 18th Congress, which the

³ Lopez, M. (2021, April 6). Patient gets COVID treatment inside car pending hospital admission. *CNN Philippines*. <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2021/4/5/patient-COVID-19-treatment-car-outside-hospital.html>

⁴ Jaymalin, M., & Romero, A. (2022, June 8). DOH confirms overcapacity in big hospitals. *Philippine Star*. <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2022/06/08/2186838/doh-confirms-overcapacity-big-hospitals>

⁵ Galvez, D. (2022, June 28). IATF will no longer consider COVID growth rate in determining alert levels. *Philippine Inquirer*. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1618001/iatf-will-no-longer-factor-in-covid-growth-rate-in-determining-alert-levels-risk-classification>

⁶ Department of Health. (2020). *Philippine Health Facility Development Plan 2020-2040*. https://doh.gov.ph/sites/default/files/publications/DOH_PHILIPPINE%20HEALTH%20FACILITY%20DEVELOPMENT%20PLAN%202020_2040_0.pdf


⁷ Department of Health. (2020). *Philippine Health Facility Development Plan 2020-2040*. https://doh.gov.ph/sites/default/files/publications/DOH_PHILIPPINE%20HEALTH%20FACILITY%20DEVELOPMENT%20PLAN%202020_2040_0.pdf

undesignated supported. It seeks to authorize the DOH to set and approve the bed capacity and service capability of all DOH hospitals. Through this bill, the DOH shall have the power to address the mismatch in occupancy of Filipino patients' access to healthcare and improve the quality of government health services. The DOH shall also provide Congress with an annual report of hospitals with approved bed capacity, along with the necessary funding requirements.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of the bill and approval of the same is earnestly sought.

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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 “*DOH Hospital Bed*
2 *Capacity and Service Capability Rationalization Act.*”

3 Sec. 2. *Purpose, Scope and Coverage.* — This Act shall streamline the process
4 for approving changes in the authorized bed capacities and corresponding service
5 capabilities of all Department of Health (DOH) hospitals.

6 Sec. 3. *Authority to Approve.* — The DOH is hereby authorized to adjust and
7 approve the authorized bed capacities and corresponding service capabilities of
8 hospitals under its supervision and control, taking into consideration the development
9 plans of the hospitals, catchment population, burden of disease, availability of human
10 resources, health care provider network, and other standards to be determined by the
11 DOH. The DOH shall, through an administrative issuance, determine the bed capacities
12 and service capabilities of DOH hospitals, subject to specific guidelines that shall be
13 issued and promulgated, within ninety (90) days upon the effectivity of this Act.

14 Sec. 4. *Philippine Health Facility Development Plan (PHFDP).* — The DOH shall
15 continue to update, develop, and implement the Philippine Health Facility
16 Development Plan (PHFDP) to guide the modernization and development plans of all
17 government health facilities, and in order to access capital outlay investment through

1 the Health Facilities Enhancement Program of the DOH and other national government
2 capital outlay investment mechanisms.

3 The Secretary of Health shall include in the DOH's programs the funding
4 requirements for the adjustment in bed capacity and service capability of each DOH
5 hospital in accordance with the PHFDP and the hospital's modernization and
6 development plan, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General
7 Appropriations Act.

8 *Sec. 5. Conversion, Upgrading, and Modernization of DOH Hospitals.* — The
9 DOH shall upgrade and modernize the existing equipment and facilities of DOH
10 hospitals to ensure that it shall be responsive to the health needs of the people
11 commensurate with the bed capacity and service capability.

12 *Sec. 6. Annual Report to Congress.* — The DOH shall provide Congress, through
13 the Committee on Health of the House of Representatives and the Committee on
14 Health and Demography of the Senate, an annual report on hospitals with approved
15 bed capacities, along with the necessary funding requirements.

16 *Sec. 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).* — The DOH shall formulate
17 the IRR of this Act within ninety (90) days upon its effectivity.

18 *Sec. 8. Separability Clause.* — If any provision or part of this act is declared
19 unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full
20 force and effect.

21 *Sec. 9. Repealing Clause.* — All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and
22 regulations, or parts thereof which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed,
23 amended, or modified accordingly.

24 *Sec. 10. Effectivity Clause.* — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after
25 its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,