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SENATE

S.B. No. 1120

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Introduced by **SENATOR IMEE R. MARCOS**

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**AN ACT  
STRENGTHENING THE NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE TO  
PANDEMIC, EPIDEMIC, AND OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES,  
CREATING A MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER  
PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article II, Section 15 of the 1987 Constitution provides that *"the State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them."*

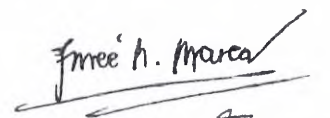
Over the years, various public health emergencies such as outbreaks and pandemics have claimed lives. A pandemic puts the entire world at risk of a markedly increased occurrence of severe morbidity and mortality. Further, simultaneous occurrence of the pandemic means that supply chains for essential products like life-saving medications and essential medical supplies will be quickly threatened causing further panic and fear to the public.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the inability of the Philippines health care system to cope with the surge of patients needing medical care due to the shortage of medically trained personnel, among others.

According to the Department of Health (DOH) Human Resource for Health Network (HRHN), the Philippines has a shortage of 290,000 health workers in the country which is based on the WHO indicative HRH ratio of 44.5 HRH to 10,000 population for the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Moreover, there is an annual out migration of 13,000 health care professionals which aggravates the deficiency in the national supply of health care workers (POEA, 2020).

Thus, this bill aims to enhance the capacity of our country to produce and call on the needed manpower and expand its human health resources in times of disasters and public health emergencies of both national and local scale through the mobilization of a Medical Reserve Corps to help ease the burden in our healthcare system, support the country's public health system and reduce its adverse health, economic, and social impact to the Filipino people.

For the foregoing reasons, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

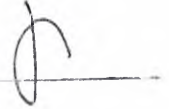
  
**IMEE R. MARCOS**

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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 “*Medical Reserve*  
2 *Corps Act.*”  
3

4           **SEC. 2.** *Declaration of Policy.* – The State shall, at all times, give paramount  
5 importance to the health of its citizens whether in the country or overseas and it shall  
6 likewise endeavor to efficiently and immediately address all potential and actual public  
7 health emergencies for the promotion of the general welfare of the people.  
8

9           **SEC. 3.** *Medical Reserve Corps.* – A Medical Reserve Corps shall be created  
10 composed of volunteer health care providers who provide health care services including,  
11 but not limited to, hospitals, medical clinics and offices, special care facilities, medical  
12 laboratories, physicians, pharmacists, dentists, physician assistants, nurse practitioners,  
13 registered and other nurses, and paramedics who provide emergency medical care,  
14 emergency medical or laboratory technicians, and ambulance and emergency medical  
15 workers. The Corps shall be called into duty during pandemic, epidemic, and other  
16 public health emergencies, as may be deemed necessary by the government.  
17

18           **SEC. 4.** *Medical Reserve Corps Database and Plan.* – The Department of Health  
19 (DOH), in coordination with the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) and the

1 Commission on Higher Education (CHED), shall establish a database of information of  
2 all individuals under the medical reserve corps which shall be updated quarterly.  
3 Provided that, the DOH shall also provide guidelines for the registration thereof.  
4

5 The DOH shall also prepare a plan which shall provide for integrated policy  
6 coordination and strategic direction with respect to all matters related to national and  
7 local public health and medical preparedness and execution and deployment of national  
8 and local response before, during, and after pandemics, epidemics, and other public  
9 health emergencies.

10  
11 **SEC. 5. *Local Government Unit Coordination.*** – The Local Government Units  
12 (LGUs) shall include the setting up or modification of health care facilities and, in  
13 coordination with the DOH, designate areas for quarantine or Isolation in preparation  
14 for any pandemic, epidemic, or other public health emergency.

15  
16 **SEC. 6. *Recruitment, Training, and Compensation.*** – The DOH, in coordination  
17 with the PRC and CHED, shall issue guidelines on the recruitment, training, and  
18 compensation for health care providers, under the Medical Reserve Corps Database, who  
19 choose to work and gain experience in public hospitals.

20  
21 **SEC. 7. *Protection Accorded to the Medical Reserve Corps.*** - All members of the  
22 Medical Reserve Corps shall be accorded protection as provided by existing labor laws  
23 and standards and other relevant occupations, safety, environmental and social  
24 legislation.

25  
26 **SEC. 8. *Appropriation.*** – An initial amount of two hundred million pesos (Php  
27 200,000,000,00) shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA) for  
28 the implementation of this Act. Thereafter, the appropriation necessary shall be  
29 determined by the DOH, in coordination with the Department of Budget and  
30 Management (DBM).

31  
32 **SEC. 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Upon the effectivity of this Act,  
33 the DOH, in coordination with the PRC and CHED, shall immediately convene and issue  
34 the implementing rules and regulations within sixty (60) days from the approval of this  
35 Act.

36

1           **SEC. 10. *Repealing Clause.*** – All provisions of existing laws, orders and  
2 regulations contrary to or inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified  
3 accordingly.

4

5           **SEC. 11. *Separability Clause.*** – If for any reason any part or provision of this Act  
6 shall be deemed unconstitutional or invalid, the other sections or provisions hereof shall  
7 not be affected and shall remain in force and effect.

8

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

*Approved,*