

23 MAR -2 A11 :02

SENATE
S.B. No. 1953

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by **SENATOR IMEE R. MARCOS**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SABLAYAN, PROVINCE OF
OCCIDENTAL MINDORO, A TERTIARY HOSPITAL, TO BE KNOWN AS THE
SABLAYAN MEDICAL CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The coastal town of Sablayan, with an encompassing land area of 218, 909 hectares, is situated at the heart of the province of Occidental Mindoro. Traveling a distance of 91 kilometers from the provincial capital, Mamburao, and 73 kilometers from the most developed town in the province, San Jose. It is considered as the biggest municipality in the country, serving as a home to 92, 598 Filipinos politically subdivided into 22 barangays¹ – where ten (10) of which are situated along the provincial coast, twelve (12) are located inland, and only three (3) barangays are considered urbanized, namely Buenavista, Poblacion, and Sto. Niño. Two of the three major islands under the jurisdiction of Sablayan are located close to the town proper; however, these islands can only be reached by boat.²

According to the list of regulated health facilities in the region of MIMAROPA as provided by the DOH Center for Health Development, there are only three (3) government-owned, all classified as level 1 hospitals in Occidental Mindoro. Only one (1) of which is located in Sablayan, namely the San Sebastian District Hospital. The other two are situated in Mamburao and San Jose which are the Occidental Mindoro Provincial Hospital and the San Jose District Hospital, respectively.³ Currently, the only access of the residents to basic healthcare services are those provided by their sole district hospital – a level 1 hospital – capable only of accommodating patients who need minor assistance and supervision and not those requiring critical care for there are no intensive care units (ICU) under this type aside from clinical laboratories, ambulance, and blood service facilities. Residents whose medical concerns require critical care and serious attention are left with no other choice but to travel from far-flung areas to hospitals located in the developed towns which are approximately 70 to 80 kilometers or four to five hours away from their place of origin.

¹ Municipality of Sablayan, Province of Occidental Mindoro Summary of Data. Official Website of Occidental Mindoro. Accessed online through <https://occidentalmindoro.gov.ph/sablayan/>.

² About Sablayan: Brief History and Quick Facts. Sablayan Municipal Tourism Office Official Website. Accessed online through <http://www.sablayan.net/about/#ourstories>.

³ List of Regulated Health Facilities in MIMAROPA. Department of Health Center for Health Development. Accessed online through <https://mimaropa.doh.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Hospitals.pdf>.

A recently conducted research with residents of Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro as the predetermined participants revealed that only 23.4% of the townspeople were diagnosed by a physician for the past one (1) year and among the illnesses were flu, fever, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, heart disease, and diabetes. 17.2% of the residents are suffering from chronic diseases whose growth in numbers is strictly alarming. Unfortunately, only 33.6% of the residents of Sablayan are aware of the presence of public health institutions in their community.⁴

Millions of Filipinos are unable to have access to basic healthcare services for these are largely attributed to poverty, diminishing health awareness, insufficient knowledge, and scarcity of medical resources and facilities. This clearly explains the situation of Filipinos residing in rural areas, particularly the ones from Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro whose primary sources of living include agriculture, fishing, and hunting. Following the passage of this measure, residents of Sablayan and other adjacent towns will no longer have to travel vast distances in order to receive the essential medical treatment that they require, regardless of it being basic, emergency, or maintenance healthcare services.

It is clearly stated in Article XIII, Section 11 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution that the 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. There shall be priority for the needs of the underprivileged, sick, elderly, disabled, women, and children. Furthermore, the State shall endeavor to provide free medical care to its citizens, most especially those who could least afford it.

In light of these, the abovementioned Constitutional objective can be achieved by means of constructing a tertiary hospital envisioned to be reinforced and strategically located in rural areas where basic health services are not easily accessible. The aim of this measure is to guarantee the provision of convenient access to quality, safe, affordable, accessible healthcare goods and services to all the residents within the town. Tertiary hospitals have the capacity to deliver advanced medical care even to cases requiring sophisticated diagnostic and therapeutic equipment as well as those that demand the expertise of trained specialists and subspecialists.

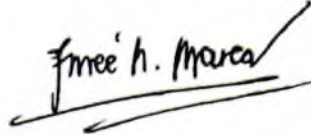
This measure seeks to attain its purpose of bridging the gap and addressing the needs of the residents to have access to tertiary healthcare services such as consultations with specialists in medicine, obstetrics and gynaecology, paediatrics, and surgery.

⁴ Ignacio R., Sajo M., Nam E., Kim C., Ahn D., Kim P., Lee K. (2015). Health Status of the Residents in Occidental Mindoro, Philippines: A Way to Make A Healthy Community. *Osong Public Health Res Perspect*. Accessed online through <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4346596/#bib7>.

Apart from these services, this hospital is also to be created for the provision of other medical services including database management, emergency and out-patient services, birthing, isolation, diagnostic and laboratory facilities such as x-ray and ultrasound. Other available services are eye, ear, nose and throat (EENT) service; oncology centers; physical therapy and rehabilitation centers, departmental clinical services, general intensive care unit and high risk pregnancy unit facilities, dental clinics, physical medicine and rehabilitation units, pharmacies, ambulatory surgical clinics, and dialysis clinics. Ancillary services will also be made accessible to the residents which include services and facilities like tertiary clinical laboratory with histopathology, blood bank, and third level x-ray.

Initiating healthcare programs and establishing remarkable efforts to improve the provision of medical assistance and services to underprivileged Filipino citizens do not solely ensure both individual and societal health. However, they can eventually contribute to the development of a progressive community when combined with adequate and improved socioeconomic support.

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

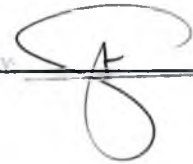

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Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

1 **SECTION 1.** There shall be established in the Municipality of Sablayan, Province
2 of Occidental Mindoro a tertiary hospital, to be known as the Sablayan Medical Center,
3 which shall be under the direct control and supervision of the Department of Health
4 (DOH).
5

6 **SEC. 2.** The DOH shall develop a hospital development plan to define the service
7 capacity, developmental goals and targets of the hospital. Any future increase in bed
8 capacity and upgrading of healthcare facilities, service capability, and human resource
9 complement shall be based on the hospital development plan.
10

11 **SEC. 3.** The DOH shall consult the local government in the Province of
12 Occidental Mindoro and the Municipality of Sablayan, and the other stakeholders in
13 determining the site of the hospital.
14

15 **SEC. 4.** The Secretary of Health shall immediately include in the Department's
16 program the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the
17 annual General Appropriations Act.
18

19 **SEC. 5. Separability Clause.** – Should any provision herein be declared
20 unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity of other provisions of this Act.
21

22 **SEC. 6. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations or
23 other issuances of parts inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed
24 or modified accordingly.
25

26 **SEC. 7. Effectivity Clause.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
27 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in any two (2) newspapers of general circulation in
28 the Philippines.

Approved,