

SENATE

S. No. 290



Introduced by Senator **PIA S. CAYETANO**

**AN ACT
MANDATING THE APPOINTMENT OF ONE MIDWIFE FOR EACH BARANGAY,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Worldwide, infant and Maternal Mortality Rates (MMR) are still alarmingly high, particularly in developing countries. According to the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund, more than half a million women lose their lives as a result of complications due to pregnancy or childbirth. Around 99 percent of all maternal deaths occur in developing countries.

Health workers play a vital role in lowering the MMR in the country. Unfortunately, there is lack of access to professional healthcare practitioners all over the country. Healthcare professionals are sorely lacking and unequally distributed in rural and urban areas. Most of our healthcare professionals, especially doctors and nurses, have left the country in search for greener pastures abroad. Given this problem, health experts recommend that the gap on the delivery of maternal and infant healthcare services be covered by the appointment of midwives who are trained to provide healthcare services, especially maternal and infant healthcare.

There is a need to act now. We cannot wait in the sideline while mothers are dying.

Midwives comprise one of the largest occupational groups in the public and private health system in the Philippines. Midwives work in the private or public sector in hospitals, birthing clinics, barangay health stations, or rural health units. In the rural areas, they are the first point of contact for patients coming into the health system. In fact, midwives are currently implementing public health programmes in these areas. With the great potential and significant contribution of midwives in augmenting the presence of professional healthcare practitioners in rural areas, the increased community presence of midwives is necessary.

This bill thus mandates to provide one midwife in each barangay. Although the recommended ratio is one midwife for every 5,000, most midwives currently cater to the needs of 10,000-30,000 individuals in their catchment area. Recognizing the importance of primary healthcare and the presence of midwives in the country, especially in the rural areas, the bill further seeks to increase the number of midwives in a barangay where there is a population of more than 5,000. This will enable the midwives to provide quality and efficient healthcare services.

Indeed, midwives play a key role in delivering patient-focused services that are accessible, affordable and appropriate to the needs of patients, as individuals, and their families. The midwifery profession is central to the delivery of an effective health service, particularly in the rural areas.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly requested.


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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 “*Midwife to the*
2 *Barangay Act.*”

3 Sec. 2. *Statement of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to protect and
4 promote the right to health of the people. The State shall provide appropriate
5 programs and measures to provide access to affordable and quality health and social
6 services, especially in rural areas. The services of midwives, as front liners in the
7 country’s health care delivery system, are essential in achieving the State’s health
8 policy, especially with regard to pre-natal and post natal maternal, and newborn,
9 care. Toward this end, this Act shall mandate the appointment of midwives for each
10 barangay to increase access to health care services for the people, especially the
11 underprivileged.

12 Sec. 3. *Ratio of Midwives to the Barangay.* – All barangays shall be equipped
13 with one (1) midwife; *Provided,* That if the population of a barangay exceeds five
14 thousand (5,000), the number of midwives shall be increased, as determined by the
15 Department of Health (DOH).

16 Sec. 4. *Role of Midwives to the Barangay.* – All Midwives to the Barangay are
17 mandated to ensure that mothers and infants, in their respective jurisdictions, are
18 given quality and essential health care services, including, but not limited to, pre-

1 natal and post natal care, breastfeeding support, providing information on the
2 importance of immunization and ensuring that infants are given the proper vaccines
3 as provided in the DOH Expanded Program on Immunization, and proper care and
4 nutrition of both the mothers and the infants, and such other duties as shall be
5 determined by the DOH.

6 *Sec. 5. Appointment of Midwives to the Barangay.* – Every city, first and
7 second-class municipality, in accordance with the Local Government Code of
8 Philippines, shall appoint a midwife in their respective barangays: *Provided,* That for
9 third to sixth class municipalities under first and second class provinces, the province
10 shall appoint a midwife in every clustered barangay: *Provided further,* That for third
11 to sixth class municipalities under third to sixth class provinces, the DOH, through its
12 center for health development, shall appoint a midwife in every clustered barangay.
13 DOH shall immediately determine which areas are in need of midwives. Priority in
14 appointments shall be given to remote areas where there are no existing healthcare
15 professionals providing for the healthcare services of the population and areas which
16 have high maternal mortality rate.

17 *Sec. 6. Qualifications of Midwives to the Barangay.* – The DOH shall provide
18 for the qualifications of the Midwife to the Barangay, who shall, as much as possible,
19 come from the same barangay or municipality where he or she will be appointed.

20 *Sec. 7. Basic Emergency Obstetric Care* – The DOH shall ensure that the
21 midwives are equipped with Basic Emergency Obstetric Care. It shall also determine,
22 subject to guidelines that it may issue, the need to further provide these midwives
23 with training on Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric Care.

24 *Sec. 8. Compensation and Benefits.* – All Midwives to the Barangay shall be
25 appropriately compensated by the DOH and shall be entitled to all the benefits
26 provided in Republic Act No. 7305, otherwise known as the "Magna Carta of Public
27 Health Workers."

28 *Sec. 9. Implementing Rules and Regulation.* – The DOH, in cooperation with
29 the Department of Interior and Local Government, the Civil Service Commission, and
30 other concerned government agencies and non-government organizations, shall
31 formulate and promulgate, within ninety days (90) from its effectivity, the rules and
32 regulations necessary to implement this Act.

1 Sec. 10. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary to implement the provisions
2 of this Act shall be charged against the appropriations of the DOH. For the LGUs, the
3 requirements shall be taken from their internal revenue allotment and other local
4 funds. Thereafter, such funds as may be necessary for the continued implementation
5 of this Act shall be included in the appropriations of the DOH and the respective
6 LGUs.

7 Sec. 11. *Separability Clause.* – If any part or provision of this Act shall be held
8 unconstitutional or invalid, other provisions thereof which are not affected thereby
9 shall continue to be in full force and effect.

10 Sec. 12. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, and other
11 presidential issuances which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed,
12 amended or modified accordingly.

13 Sec. 13. *Effectivity.* – This Act takes effect immediately after its publication in
14 at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,