

SENATE
S. No. 316

'19 JUL 10 A 9:43

Introduced by Senator Grace Poe RECEIVED BY:

**AN ACT
IMPROVING AND PROMOTING QUALITY DELIVERY OF HEALTH SERVICES
BY BARANGAY HEALTH WORKERS IN THE BARANGAY LEVEL, PROVIDING
FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

Explanatory Note

A "Barangay Health Worker", commonly known as a "BHW", is "a person who has undergone training programs under any accredited government and non-government organization and who voluntarily renders primary health care services in the community after having been accredited to function as such by the local health board in accordance with the guidelines promulgated by the DOH."¹ In 2009, the active accredited BHWs reached 196,562. Said number has increased to 219,433 in 2011.

BHWs undergo a basic training program under an accredited government or non-government organization, and render primary care services in the community. They provide services for barangays such as maternal, new-born and child health. They are the country's "front-liners" in the delivery of basic health services at the grassroots level. As such, BHWs serve directly at the level of all the more than 42,000 barangays in the Philippines.

BHWs live in the communities they serve. They provide information, education and motivation services for primary health care, maternal and child health, child rights, family planning and nutrition. They may administer immunizations and regular weighing of children. They often assist midwives in providing birthing services. On average, each BHW is expected to work with around 20 families in their community. The scarcity of trained individuals, however, has narrowed down the number of volunteers, especially in some remote areas, where now one or two volunteers service an entire barangay.

Despite the above-illustrated importance of our BHWs, Republic Act ("R.A.") No. 7883, or the "Barangay Health Workers' Benefits and Incentives Act of 1995", merely treat BHWs as "volunteers". As such, BHWs only receive Php1,000.00 to

¹ <https://www.doh.gov.ph/node/837>

Php6,000.00 as their "allowance" per month. Moreover, BHWs are at the mercy of "politics" in the barangay level as their tenure are dependent on the incumbent barangay officials.

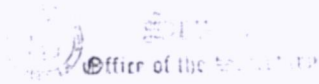
Just recently, R.A. No. 11223, or the "Universal Health Care Act", mandates that the DOH, DILG, PhilHealth and the LGUs "shall endeavor to integrate health systems into province-wide and city-wide health systems".² Moreover, said law likewise mandates the "appropriate generation, recruitment, retraining, regulation, retention and reassessment of health workforce based on population health needs."³ Surely, the already over-burdened BHWs will have more responsibilities due to the enactment of the Universal Health Care Act. As such, it is now high time to revisit and revise R.A. No. 7883 in order to make BHWs key partners of the government in the delivery of grassroots-level health services by improving BHWs' salaries and security of tenure, among others.

In view of the foregoing, immediate approval of this legislative measure is hereby earnestly sought.


GRACE POE

² Section 19 of R.A. No. 11223.

³ Section 20 of R.A. No. 11223.



SENATE
S. No. 316

'19 JUL 10 A 9:43

Introduced by Senator Grace Poe

RECEIVED BY: _____

AN ACT
IMPROVING AND PROMOTING QUALITY DELIVERY OF HEALTH SERVICES
BY BARANGAY HEALTH WORKERS IN THE BARANGAY LEVEL, PROVIDING
FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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 “Barangay Health
2 Workers and Services Reform Act of 2019”.

3 Sec. 2. *Statement of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to
4 promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure prosperity and
5 independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that
6 provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of
7 living, and an improved quality of life for all. The State recognizes that quality health
8 care services promote social justice in all phases of national development.

9 The State further protects and promotes the right to health of the people and
10 provides conditions of health empowerment, where each individual has access to
11 information and services that will bring about health and well-being. Primary Health
12 care is recognized as the major strategy towards health empowerment, emphasizing
13 the need to provide accessible, available and affordable quality health services
14 through community based participatory strategies.

15 To this end, the government and all its instrumentalities recognize the
16 economic and social rights of barangay health workers to just compensation,
17 consistent with the principle of equal pay for equal work and work of equal value.

1 *Sec. 3. Definition of terms. –*

- 2 a.) *Barangay Health Workers (BHW)*, is a support health workers in the barangay
3 unit, as defined and covered by republic Act (RA) 7305;
- 4 b.) *Magna Carta for Public Health Workers*, as used in this Act, shall refer to RA
5 7305;
- 6 c.) *Primary Health Care (PHC)*, is essential health care made universally
7 accessible to individuals and families in the in the community and country can
8 afford to maintain at every stage and at a cost that the community and
9 country can afford to maintain at every stage of their development in the
10 spirit of self-reliance and self-determination. It forms an integral part both of
11 the country's health system, of which is the central function and main focus,
12 and of the overall social and economic development of the community,
13 characterized by partnership ad empowerment of the people by means
14 acceptable to them, It is the first level of contact of individuals, the family and
15 community with the national health system bringing health care as close as
16 possible to where people live and work, and constitutes the first element of a
17 continuing health care as close as possible to where people live and work,
18 and constitute the first element of continuing health care process¹;
- 19 d.) *Public Health Worker (PHW)*, as used in this Act, shall mean all persons who
20 are engaged in health and health-related work, all persons employed in all
21 hospitals, sanitarium, health infirmaries, health centers, rural health units,
22 barangay health stations, clinics and other health-related establishments
23 owned and operated by the Government or its political subdivisions with
24 original charters and shall include medical, allied health professional,
25 administrative and support personnel employed regardless of their
26 employment status, as pursuant to Sec. 3 of the Magna Carta of Public Health
27 Workers.

28 *Sec. 4. Barangay Health Center (BHC).* – There shall be one Barangay Health
29 Center in every barangay unit, with the following basic and essential facilities and
30 provisions:

- 31 a.) Adequate lighting and ventilation;
- 32 b.) Adequate supply of portable water and electricity;

- 1 c.) Floor Area of at least twenty (20) square meters;
- 2 d.) Equipment including, but not limited to, blood pressure apparatus,
- 3 dressing kit, over the counter medicines, weighing scale for infants and
- 4 adults, thermometers, standard operating procedure manual from the
- 5 Department of Health (DOH), glucometer, and delivery kit;
- 6 e.) Examining Area which must be enclosed, with bed, cabinet, foot stool
- 7 and stool;
- 8 f.) Toilet with sink and running water; and,
- 9 g.) Consultation Area with table, cabinet and two chairs.

10 Sec. 5. *Functions of the Barangay Health Center.* – Each BHC shall have the
11 following functions:

- 12 a.) Delivers basic and primary care services for the community (e.g.
- 13 immunization, prenatal check-up, check-up of well and ill infants etc.);
- 14 b.) Coordinates efforts and actions of the different members of health
- 15 team;
- 16 c.) Keeps records of health indices, community profile, and other data;
- 17 d.) Serves as an area of congregation for meetings of the health team;
- 18 e.) Serves as training of future and present members of the health team:
- 19 and
- 20 f.) Assists and coordinates with the respective Local Government Units
- 21 (LGUs) and appropriate offices on first aid and procedures in disaster
- 22 risk reduction.

23 Sec. 6. *Barangay Health Workers in the Botika sa Barangay.* – When
24 available and offered in the community especially in far-flung areas, the Barangay
25 Health Workers shall man and operate "*Botika sa Barangay*" project or service. They
26 shall likewise be given appropriate trainings by the Department of Health and Food
27 and Drug Administration in full consultation with the relevant professional
28 organizations and associations.

29 Sec. 7. *Referral System.* – The BHC shall observe and follow the referral
30 system framework of Primary Health Care.

1 *Sec. 8. Barangay Health Team Placement.* – The BHC shall be composed of
2 Nurse, Midwife, and BHW. The operation and functioning of the BHC shall be headed
3 and supervised by a Nurse.

4 Each BHC shall be manned by a health team proportionate with the existing
5 population in the Barangay:

6 a.) Nurse – There shall be at least one nurse for every barangay with a
7 population not exceeding five thousand (5,000);

8 b.) Midwife – There shall be at least one midwife for every barangay with
9 a population not exceeding two thousand five hundred (2,500);

10 c.) BHW - There shall be at least one BHW for every barangay with a
11 population not exceeding five hundred (500).

12 *Sec. 9. BHW Qualifications.* –

13 (a) Any person who has completed the Technical Education and Skills
14 Development Authority (TESDA) BHW program or undergone training specific for
15 BHW by TESDA – accredited institution: Provided, that he or she has passed the
16 training assessment and obtained the equivalent national certification.

17 (b) All BHW, regardless of accreditation or registration status, who have
18 served for at least two (2) years from the effectivity of this Act must undergo BHW
19 assessment by TESDA – accredited assessors and pass the equivalent national
20 certification. Only those who has obtained the equivalent national certification shall
21 be eligible for employment.

22 *Sec. 10. Hiring of BHWs.* –

23 (a) The Local Government Selection and Promotion Board shall process the
24 hiring of the Barangay Health Team personnel, pursuant to existing Civil Service
25 rules, regulations, issuances and orders on placement and hiring.

26 (b) All existing BHWs who has met the qualifications under Section 8
27 subparagraph (b) of this Act shall be given preference in hiring and priority in
28 placement.

29 *Sec. 11. Duties and Responsibilities of BHWs.* –

30 a.) The BHW performs the following duties and responsibilities independently:

31 1. Height and weight monitoring, and reporting the same to the BHC;

32 2. Monitoring and follow-up defaulters, and reporting the same to the BHC;

- 1 3. Reporting to the BHC any incidence of disease or any health cases in the
- 2 community;
- 3 4. Communicating and coordinating with the community to participate in BHC
- 4 activities;
- 5 5. Gathering data about the health of the community, filing, encoding, and
- 6 reporting the same to the BHC;
- 7 6. Administering first aid;
- 8 7. Conducting health visits; and
- 9 8. Responding in natural calamities and disasters.

10 b.) The BHW performs the following duties and responsibilities assistive to the
11 Barangay Health Team:

- 12 1. Sputum collection;
- 13 2. Identifying people with disease and sickness;
- 14 3. Health community profiling;
- 15 4. Psychosocial debriefing for stress and post – calamity initiatives; and
- 16 5. Strengthening the health programs of the government.

17 Sec. 12. *Compensation of BHWs.* – The entry pay level of a BHW shall be the
18 prevailing rate equivalent to Salary Grade Ten “SG 10”.

19 Sec. 13. *Incentives and Benefits for BHWs.* – A BHW shall be entitled to the
20 same incentives and benefits provided under the Magna Carta for Public Health
21 workers. Further, they shall be covered by the existing statutory benefits such as
22 GSIS, Philhealth, and Pag-ibig. Provided, that in addition, they shall be given burial
23 and disability assistance in case of death or if the BHW is afflicted by illness which
24 results to disability especially if it occurs in the duration of his service. Provided,
25 further, that a regular adjustment in monetary and other non-monetary incentives
26 shall be made to help improve the living condition of Barangay Health Workers.

27 Sec. 14. *Penal Provision.* – Any person who violates the provisions of this act
28 shall be criminally, civilly, and administratively liable.

29 Sec. 15. *Implementing Agencies.* – Within one (1) year from the effectivity of
30 this act, the TESDA and DOH, with the participation of various health union
31 representatives shall formulate, finalize and launch the BHW training program,
32 assessment, and national certification program.

1 The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), LGUs, and other
2 appropriate government agencies, with the participation of various health union
3 representatives, shall formulate and provide effective mechanism for the selection
4 and hiring of BHWs.

5 The Department of Budget and Management (DBM), LGUs, and other
6 appropriate government agencies, shall allocate necessary funds for compensation
7 of the barangay health team.

8 Sec. 16. *Transitory Provision.* – Within one (1) year from effectivity of this act,
9 the TESDA, DOH, DILG, and other concerned LGUs, shall allocate funds from their
10 annual appropriations to immediately implement section 8 – subparagraph (b) and
11 section 9 of this Act.

12 Sec. 17. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from
13 the effectivity of this act, the TESDA, DOH, DILG, LGUs, in coordination and
14 participation of various health union representatives, shall provide the Implementing
15 Rules and Regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

16 The Implementing Rules and Regulations shall be published in the Official
17 Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

18 Sec. 18. *Separability Clause.* – Should any provision of this Act be declared
19 unconstitutional, the remaining parts not affected thereby shall remain valid and
20 operational.

21 Sec. 19. *Repealing Clause.* – Republic Act No. 7883. Otherwise known as the
22 “Barangay Health Workers Benefits and Incentives Act of 1995”, is hereby repealed.
23 All other laws, decrees, orders, circulars, issuances, rules and regulations and parts
24 thereof which are inconsistent with this act are hereby repealed, amended or
25 modified accordingly.

26 Sec. 20. *Effectivity.* – This act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
27 publication in the Official Gazette or in any two (2) newspaper of general circulation
28 in the Philippines.

Approved,