

SENATE

S. No. 1505

20 MAY -4 P 4:56

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Introduced by Senator Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid

**AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TERTIARY CARE
HOSPITALS IN ALL REGIONS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the fore the existing gaps and problems that beset our country's health care system. With the growth in the number of infected persons, hospitals and other health facilities even in the National Capital Region reached their full capacities¹. During the initial days of the pandemic, we only have the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine as the sole confirmatory testing laboratory for the virus in the whole Philippines². The situation is even worse in the provinces. Already a month into the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ), for the whole of Mindanao, testing for COVID-19 can only be done at the Southern Philippines Medical Center in Davao City³. For Visayas area, there are only two testing laboratories: Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center in Cebu and Western Visayas Medical Center in Iloilo⁴. The prognosis for our health care system, as revealed by how we responded to this pandemic, is bleak – it is in bad shape and is in dire need of upgrading.

¹<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1247913/5-metro-hospitals-reach-full-capacity-for-covid-19-cases>

²<https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/3/20/coronavirus-testing-in-philippines.html>

³<https://www.mindanews.com/top-stories/2020/04/ritm-plans-to-capacitate-davnor-hospital-for-testing-of-covid-19/>

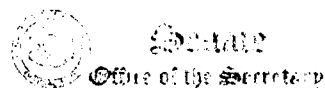
⁴<https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/4/15/16-laboratories-now-testing-for-COVID-19.html>

One way that we can improve its ailing condition is to build and establish more hospitals all over the country, specifically new hospitals which are classified as tertiary care facilities. The mission is not only to give universal access to health care, but to give universal access to a health care institution with a world-class quality medical services and are at par with international standards and best practices. This proposed measure envisions that all of the regions will have their own tertiary care hospitals within five (5) years from its effectivity, with top priority being given to regions which do not have any regional hospital of whatever classification lower than tertiary care. This bill also provides that provinces which are geographically isolated from their region's tertiary care hospital such as island provinces shall have the priority for the establishment of a tertiary care hospital of their own. To ease the budgetary burden to the government, new facilities need not be constructed for areas which already have regional hospitals – instead they shall only be considered for upgrading, modernization and conversion to a tertiary care hospital. With this program, our constituents in the provinces will no longer have to travel all the way to Metro Manila or the highly urbanized cities of neighboring regions in order to attend to their medical needs.

In view of this, early passage of this bill is sought.



MANUEL "LITO" M. LAPID
Senator



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ALL REGIONS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

1 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as "Regional Tertiary Care
2 Hospitals Act."

3
4 Section 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared as the policy of the
5 State to adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development,
6 which shall be available and accessible to all the people at affordable cost. Towards
7 this end, the Philippine health delivery system must be reformed and modernized in
8 order for it to be available, accessible and affordable pursuant to the common goal
9 of bringing universal health care for Filipinos.

10
11 Section 3. *Establishment of Tertiary Care Hospitals in All Regions.* – Within
12 five (5) years from the effectivity of this Act, all regions must have at least one (1)
13 tertiary care hospital operating within its territorial jurisdiction. The Department of
14 Health (DOH) must formulate a prioritization plan for the purpose of implementing
15 this Act, subject to the following considerations:

- 1 a. Top priority shall be given to all regions which do not have any
2 regional hospital of whatever classification lower than tertiary care
3 hospital;
4 b. Provinces which are geographically isolated (e.g. island provinces)
5 from their region's tertiary care hospital shall likewise be given priority
6 for the establishment of a tertiary care hospital; and
7 c. Existing Regional Hospitals, as identified by DOH, shall be considered
8 for upgrading, modernization and conversion to a tertiary care
9 hospital.
10

11 Section 4. *Audit and Inventory of Regional Hospitals.* – Within six (6) months
12 from the promulgation of the implementing rules and regulations of this Act, an
13 audit and inventory of the physical facilities, equipment and instruments as well as
14 the personnel of the Regional Hospitals shall be conducted to determine the present
15 classification of the respective regional hospitals. The result of the audit and
16 inventory shall be the basis of the respective upgrade and modernization plan for
17 each Regional Hospital.
18

19 Section 5. *Appropriations.* - The amount necessary for the implementation of
20 this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations of the Department of
21 Health.
22

23 Section 6. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days from
24 the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Health, in coordination with other
25 relevant government agencies, shall issue the necessary rules and regulations to
26 implement the provisions of this Act.
27

28 Section 7. *Repealing Clause.* —All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders,
29 proclamations, rules and regulations, or any part thereof, which are inconsistent with
30 the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.
31

1 Section 8. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part of this Act, or the
2 application thereof to any person or circumstance, is held unconstitutional or invalid,
3 the remainder of this Act shall not be affected thereby.

4

5 Section 9. *Effectivity Clause.* — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days
6 from its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of
7 general circulation.

8

9 *Approved,*