

24 JUL 23 A11:18

SENATE

S.B. No. 2740

RECEIVED BY: 

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR RISA HONTIVEROS

**AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR HOSPITAL AND HEALTHCARE BENEFITS FOR PUBLIC AND
PRIVATE SCHOOL TEACHERS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It has long been established that teachers, especially in public schools, have been overstretched over the years and routinely perform functions on top of their actual classroom instructions or teaching loads.

For one, teachers, aside from delivering education services, are tasked to perform multiple healthcare roles—i.e. government partners in the implementation of health and nutrition programs, first aid responders, mental and psychosocial service providers, etc.—yet, they are highly exposed to occupational health risks and often unable to strike a healthy work-life balance. (Lasco, Yu, David, & Basic, 2023)

Teachers groups, such as the Teachers Dignity Coalition, shared that most of the teachers, especially those in public school settings, are exposed to physical health risks (e.g. unbearable extreme heat), respiratory and voice disorder problems (e.g. COVID-19, cough, sore throat, hoarse voice), musculoskeletal injury (e.g. lower back and leg pain), and other health concerns (e.g. migraine, stress, sleep problems).

Given the government's duty to care for and to fulfill people's right to health, there is a need to provide teachers with adequate hospital and healthcare benefits to provide them with financial protection from these occupational health risks.

Hence, this bill aims to (a.) establish specialty centers and hospital wards in DOH-retained hospitals; (b.) expand PHILHEALTH coverage and benefits; (c.) strengthen medical assistance programs; (d.) provide medical and health discounts; and (e.) allow mental health and wellness leaves for teachers.

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


RISA HONTIVEROS
Senator

**NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Third Regular Session)**

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**PROVIDING FOR HOSPITAL AND HEALTHCARE BENEFITS FOR PUBLIC AND
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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 "Healthy Buhay at
2 Hanapbuhay Para sa Guro Act".

3 Section 2. Declaration of Policy - It is the policy of the State to adopt an
4 integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall endeavor
5 to make essential health and other social services available to all people. The State
6 further recognizes the role of Filipino teachers in the delivery of education services as
7 a public and common good. Towards this end, the State shall fulfill the right to health
8 and promote the well-being of Filipino teachers and their dependents through the
9 provision of available, accessible, and affordable medical and healthcare services.

10 Section 3. Coverage. This Act shall apply to all public and private elementary
11 and secondary school teachers regardless of length of service and status of
12 employment and their declared dependents.

13 Section 4. Special Centers and Hospital Wards Para sa Mga Guro. The
14 Department of Health (DOH) is mandated to establish teachers' health centers and to
15 designate special wards for teachers in all of its retained hospitals and specialty
16 centers. Provided that no fees or expenses shall be charged or paid by the teachers
17 and their qualified dependents in public health facilities.

1 Section 5. PHILHEALTH Plus Para sa Mga Guro. All public and private school
2 teachers, regardless of their length of service and status of employment, shall be
3 automatically covered by the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PHILHEALTH).
4 The premium contributions of public school teachers shall be paid by the national
5 government. Provided, that premium contributions of private school teachers shall be
6 equally shared by the educational institutions and the national government. Provided
7 further, PhilHealth is mandated to increase the health benefits coverage of teachers
8 and their dependents to at least twenty percent (20%).

9 Section 6. Medical Assistance Program Para sa Guro . The DOH, DSWD, and
10 DepEd shall establish, harmonize, and strengthen its medical assistance program for
11 teachers to include, but not limited to, subsidies on the hospitalization and medical
12 procedures for teachers and their qualified dependents in private health facilities.

13 Section 7. Medical and Health Discounts Para sa Guro. All teachers shall be
14 entitled to a ten percent (10%) discount and exemption from the value-added tax
15 (VAT), if applicable, on the purchase of medicines and other essential medical and
16 health products.

17 Section 8. Mental Health and Wellness Leave. All teachers shall be entitled to a
18 mental health and wellness leave of not more than five (5) working days per year.
19 The mental health and wellness leave shall be in addition to the regular vacation and
20 sick leave entitlements provided under existing laws.

21 Section 9. Implementing Rules and Regulations. - The Department of Education
22 (DepEd) and Department of Health (DOH), in consultation with concerned national
23 government agencies, teachers' unions, and organizations, shall promulgate within
24 ninety (90) days after the effectivity of this Act the necessary rules and regulations for
25 its effective and immediate implementation.

26 Section 10. Appropriations - The amount necessary to implement the provisions
27 of this Act shall be provided in the General Appropriation Act.

28 Section 11. Tax Exemptions - All donations, contributions, bequests, subsidies,
29 or financial aids received by government agencies for the implementation of this Act
30 shall be exempt from payment of taxes under the National Internal Revenue Code and
31 the Local Government Code.

1 Section 12. Repealing Clause. - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, and
2 regulations, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed,
3 amended or modified accordingly.

4 Section 13. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
5 publication in the Official Gazette or in newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,