

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Philippines



SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

5990
HOUSE BILL NO. _____

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE ALFRED VARGAS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The ratio of doctors to patients in the country has always been a challenge for the public health sector. Recent data reveals that there are only 70,000 doctors for a hundred million citizens. The ratio is even worse in rural areas, where for every population of 100,000, there are only three doctors who can attend to their patients. Unfortunately, global standards dictate a 1:1,000 doctor-patient ratio, thus, the Philippines is very much far behind in meeting this requirement.

It is therefore mandatory to address this medical manpower scarcity through a state-sponsored scholarship program that will enable and encourage more and more students to go into the medical field and serve their fellow countrymen, especially in the rural areas. This bill hopes to bring at least one doctor per town, thereby significantly improving the ratio of doctors to patients in the country and strengthening the public health care system.

The scholarship program shall be open to qualified natural born citizens not more than 25 years of age who belong to the top 30% of their graduating class but who are financially unable to fund their medical studies. Upon passing the medical board exam, the student shall be required to serve at least four years in a general or regional medical center and deployed to their respective hometowns. With this bill's passage, an institutional mechanism to increase our pool of Filipino doctors to provide basic healthcare is attained.

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


ALFRED VARGAS

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AN ACT
PROVIDING MEDICAL SCHOLARSHIPS TO QUALIFIED STUDENTS IN ALL MUNICIPALITIES ESTABLISHING FOR THIS PURPOSE THE ONE TOWN: ONE DOCTOR SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSE

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

SECTION 1. Short Title – This Act shall be known as the “One Town: One Doctor Act.”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy – It is hereby declared as the policy of the State to provide priority measures that can help reduce social and economic inequalities. It is also the policy of the State to undertake health manpower development responsive to the country’s health service needs.

For this purpose, the government shall institutionalize scholarship programs to deserving and qualified individuals that will establish access for them to pursue education and train in the field of medicine, and shall formulate and implement such policies and programs to systematically integrate these individuals, upon qualifying as doctors of medicine, into the public health care system.

SEC. 3 One Town: One Doctor Scholarship Program. – The Department of Health (DOH) shall establish a One Town: One Doctor Scholarship Program that will grant scholarship and financial assistance to qualified Filipinos who want to pursue a degree in Doctor of Medicine. The scholarship shall cover expenses for, among others, tuition, laboratory and miscellaneous fees, and other related school fees; required textbooks, supplier and equipment; clothing and uniform allowances; traveling expenses and subsistence and living allowances: Provided, That the program shall endeavor to provide a medical scholarship to an interested and deserving student from each of the municipalities of the country in order to achieve the goal of One Town: One Doctor as provided in Sc. 6 hereof: Provided, further, That should there be no resident from a given municipality who shall qualify for the program, the allotted slot may be assumed by a scholar coming from another town in the same province: Provided, finally, That the scholar who

assumed the slot of another municipality shall render service in the municipality where the slot was assumed.

SEC. 4. Qualifications of Candidates. – All qualified scholars shall possess the following qualifications:

a. Must be a bonafide resident of the municipality where the scholar filed an application for the program; with exception to those who shall assume the slots of municipalities where no resident qualified for the program;

b. Must belong to the top thirty percent (30%) of their respective graduating classes and must be completing or already completed any of the undergraduate prerequisite courses for a doctoral degree in medicine;

c. Family and or personal incomes are not sufficient to finance their education in the field of medicine; and

d. The University concerned may determine such other qualifications as it deems necessary for the admission of the students.

SEC. 5. Conditions of the Scholarship Grant. – The One Town: One Doctor Scholarship Program shall have the following conditionalities:

a. The scholar shall pass the admission examinations and related requirements of the medical school that the scholar plans to enroll in;

b. The scholar shall carry the full load of subjects prescribed per semester by the medical school, and shall, under no circumstances, drop a course which will result in under-loading;

c. The scholar may be allowed, for valid reasons preventing his enrolment, to defer availing of the scholarship and file a leave of absence for a period not exceeding one (1) school years; and

d. The scholar shall receive and continue to enjoy the benefits of the scholarship until the completion of the course.

SEC. 6. Public Health Service System. – The scholar shall be integrated into the public health and medical service system as a medical doctor, with the appropriate rank and salary upon passing the medical board examination. The service and integration to the public service will be for a period of at least four (4) years upon graduation: Provided, That the scholar shall undertake post graduate internship in a public health or medical institution and such internship with salaries allocated shall be part of the mandatory service and integration into the public health and medical service system: Provided, further, That upon graduation, the scholar shall be deployed in the scholar's hometown to achieve the program's goal of having at least one doctor per municipality: Provided, finally, That the scholar who assumed the slot of another municipality where no resident qualified shall be deployed to the same municipality where the slot was assumed.

SEC. 7. Information Dissemination. – The DOH shall conduct regular information dissemination and recruitment with regard to the One Town: One Doctor Scholarship Program to ensure the continuous supply of medical scholars to all municipalities in the country.

SEC. 8. Appropriations. – The amounts necessary to effectively carry out the initial implementation of this Act shall be sourced from the current budget of the DOH. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the succeeding General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 9. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within ninety days (90) after the effectivity of this Act, the Commission on Higher Education, the DOH and the Department of Budget and Management shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act.

SEC. 10. Separability Clause. – If, for any reason, any provision of this Act or any part thereof shall be held unconstitutional and invalid, the other parts or provisions of this Act, which are not affected thereby, shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 11 Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, resolutions, orders or ordinances or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act, are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 12. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation or in the Official Gazette.

Approved,