



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

H. No. 6416

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BY REPRESENTATIVES GASATAYA, SUAN, ROMUALDEZ (Y.M.), ACIDRE, GO (M.), ABUNDA, MASTURA, KHONGHUN, CAOAGDAN, CARI, DAZA, RODRIGUEZ (E.), SUANSING (M.A.), CO-PILAR, ADIONG, BASCUG, MANUEL, MAGSINO, GULLAS, NAVA, PUMAREN, VERZOSA, PADIERNOS, ZAMORA (M.C.), BUHAIN, SALO, QUIMBO, MARIANO-HERNANDEZ, DUJALI, EUDELA, ORTEGA, SACDALAN, ABALOS, PRIMICIAS-AGABAS, GALEOS, TUTOR, HERNANDEZ, ALVAREZ (M.), AQUINO, MERCADO-REVILLA, CO (E.), SINGSON-MEEHAN, ALBANO, PALMA, SUAREZ, ABANTE, ALVAREZ (J.), ARENAS, BAUTISTA-LIM, BONGALON, CABREDO, CAJAYON-UY, CELESTE, CUARESMA, ESPINA, GO (E.C.), GONZAGA, HARESCO, LOYOLA, MATUGAS, MOMO, TIANGCO, UMALI, VIOLAGO, YU (D.G.), ZUBIRI, ADVINCULA, ALMARIO, AMANTE, ANG, ASISTIO, AUMENTADO, BOSITA, BUSTOS, CHATTO, COJUANGC (J.), CRUZ (A.), CRUZ (R.), DAGOOC, DIMAPORO (S.A.), DIONISIO, FORTES, FRESNEDI, GARCIA (D.), GARCIA (M.A.), GARDIOLA, GOLEZ, GUTIERREZ, LAGON (D.), LAGON (S.), LAZATIN, LEE, LEGARDA, LUISTRO, MACEDA, MANGAOANG, MANQUIZ, MATIBAG, NOGRALES (M.I.), OUANO-DIZON, PADUANO, PANALIGAN, PANCHO, PLEYTO, REVILLA (R.J.), SAKALURAN, SALI, SANTOS, TAN (J.), TANCHAY, TULFO (J.), VARGAS, VERGARA, YAP (C.), ENVERGA, ESCUDERO, MARINO, MARQUEZ, MIGUEL, ROMULO, ROQUE, SAULOG, YAP (C.T.), VILLAFUERTE (L.R.), SINGSON (R.V.) AND DALIPE, PER COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 188

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AN ACT  
STRENGTHENING THE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES OF STATE UNIVERSITIES AND  
COLLEGES AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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 “*State Universities and Colleges*  
2 *(SUCs) Mental Health Service Act*”.

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4       **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to uphold the basic  
5 right of every Filipino to sound mental health and ensure access to appropriate interventions, therapy,  
6 and treatment as needed. Pursuant to this mandate, the State shall institute policies to promote the mental  
7 health and wellness of students, faculty, teaching and non-teaching staff, and other personnel in the  
8 campuses of SUCs through, among others, the establishment of a Mental Health Office in all SUCs, and  
9 the hiring, deployment, and training of additional SUCs-based mental health service personnel.

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11       All SUCs shall ensure that proper and adequate mental health services are provided to their  
12 students, faculty, non-teaching staff and other personnel. In this regard, all SUCs, through their Mental  
13 Health Offices, shall design programs and provide services that shall assist students in resolving  
14 emotional, behavioral, and psychosocial issues that are barriers to learning and enhance the preparedness  
15 of the faculty, teaching, non-teaching staff, and other personnel to foster an enabling environment for  
16 students to acquire knowledge and to develop intellectually.

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18       **SEC. 3. Definition of Terms.** – As used in this Act:

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20       a) *Guidance counselor* refers to an individual who possesses a license or certification granted by  
21 the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) and holds at the minimum a master’s degree in Guidance  
22 and Counseling, Guidance, or Counseling, without prejudice to those registered under the grandfather’s  
23 clause of Republic Act No. 9258, otherwise known as the “Guidance and Counseling Act of 2004”, and  
24 is competent to perform guidance and counseling, career guidance and implement mental health  
25 programs;

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27       b) *Mental health* refers to a state of well-being in which the individual realizes one’s own abilities  
28 and potentials, copes adequately with the normal stresses of life, displays resilience in the face of extreme  
29 life events, works productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a positive contribution to the  
30 community;

31  
32       c) *Mental health professional* refers to a medical doctor, nurse, guidance counselor, psychologist,  
33 or any other appropriately-trained and qualified person with specific skills relevant to, and necessary for,  
34 the provision of mental health services;

35  
36       d) *Mental health services* refer to the psychosocial, psychiatric, or neurologic activities and  
37 programs along the whole range of the mental health support services including promotion, prevention,  
38 treatment, and aftercare, which are provided by mental health facilities and mental health professionals;

39  
40       e) *Psychologist* refers to a natural person who has professional training and clinical skills in  
41 psychotherapeutic intervention and assessment for mental health problems and possesses a license or  
42 certification granted by the PRC and holds at the minimum a master’s degree in Psychology without  
43 prejudice to those granted licenses under the grandfather’s clause of Republic Act No. 10029, otherwise  
44 known as the “Philippine Psychology Act of 2009”;

45  
46       f) *SUCs-based mental health service personnel* refers to any mental health professional who is  
47 hired or deployed by, or has a contract with an SUC to render mental health services in its campus.

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2       **SEC. 4. *Establishment of Mental Health Offices in All SUCs Campuses.*** – The Commission on  
3 Higher Education (CHED) shall, subject to the rules and regulations of the Civil Service Commission  
4 (CSC) and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), and the policies, standards, and  
5 guidelines of the CHED, require all SUCs to establish a Mental Health Office in all their campuses.  
6

7       The Mental Health Offices shall set up campus hotlines with dedicated and trained guidance  
8 counselors to provide assistance to the whole SUC Community, especially the students. Special attention  
9 shall be given to those identified to have mental health problems or conditions, especially those at risk  
10 of committing suicide.  
11

12       The CHED and the SUCs, through their Mental Health Offices, shall initiate and sustain a  
13 heightened campaign to raise the collective consciousness about mental health. The awareness campaign  
14 shall give special emphasis to the issues of suicide prevention, stress handling, mental health and  
15 nutrition, and guidance and counseling. The campaign shall ensure that the whole SUC community,  
16 especially the students, is aware of in-campus mental health services.  
17

18       The SUCs, through the Mental Health Offices, shall implement mental health programs and  
19 projects designed to promote the mental health and well-being of faculty, students, and personnel alike.  
20

21       Each Mental Health Office shall be manned by trained mental health professionals who shall serve  
22 as the mental health service personnel of the SUCs.  
23

24       The SUCs-based mental health service personnel of the Mental Health Offices, including those  
25 who shall be hired upon the effectivity of this Act, shall create a mechanism for timely crisis intervention  
26 and suicide prevention and the appropriate response strategies for the whole SUCs community, especially  
27 the students.  
28

29       The CHED shall, in coordination with the SUCs, establish mechanisms to maximize existing services  
30 offered by other executive departments such as the attached agencies to the Department of Health (DOH)  
31 dealing with mental health and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).  
32

33       **SEC. 5. *Hiring, Training and Deployment of Mental Health Professionals.*** – Subject to the  
34 guidelines set by the CHED and the SUCs, CSC and DBM, the SUCs shall hire, train and deploy mental  
35 health professionals, including a psychologist, to the Mental Health Office to ensure that each SUC shall  
36 have mental health professionals or mental health service providers within five (5) years from the  
37 effectivity of this Act.  
38

39       The SUCs shall, in coordination with the CHED, prepare the appropriate plantilla positions to be  
40 submitted to the DBM for evaluation and approval for the additional SUC-based mental health service  
41 personnel to be hired under this Act, subject to the existing organizational, staffing, position classification  
42 and compensation policies, rules, and regulations.  
43

44       Notwithstanding the provisions of Republic Act No. 9258, otherwise known as the “Guidance and  
45 Counseling Act of 2004”, SUCs may hire, as may be necessary, college graduates who do not yet qualify  
46 as mental health professionals but who possess a background in psychology or similar fields to provide  
47 mental health services: *Provided*, That the CHED shall provide for the appropriate training and  
48 instruction of such college graduates in order for them to gain and develop the necessary skills to render

1 counselling services to faculty, students and school personnel, and assist them in managing mental health  
2 issues: *Provided, further*, That such services shall be rendered under the supervision of qualified mental  
3 health professionals within the schools division: *Provided, finally*, That a college graduate hired to work  
4 in a Mental Health Office shall, within three (3) years from the date of employment in the SUC, secure  
5 the appropriate license to practice as a mental health professional and meet the relevant qualification  
6 requirements of their position.

7  
8 The CHED and the SUCs, through the Mental Health Offices, shall formulate a scheme for the  
9 continuous training of mental health service personnel, taking into consideration the latest scientific  
10 studies, psycho-social approaches and know-how on mental health and mental health services, in  
11 accordance with the provisions of Republic Act No. 10912, otherwise known as the "Continuing  
12 Professional Development Act of 2016".

13  
14 **SEC. 6. *Professional and Career Development of Mental Health Professionals.*** – The CHED  
15 shall, in coordination with the DBM, CSC, DOH and the PRC:

16  
17 a) Prepare a uniform career and personnel development plan that shall include provisions on  
18 personal wellness, merit promotion, performance evaluation, in-service training, graduate scholarships,  
19 research grants, and incentive award system;

20  
21 b) Match the salary grades of mental health professionals with related plantilla items under the  
22 provisions of Republic Act No. 6758, otherwise known as the "Compensation and Position Classification  
23 Act of 1989," as amended;

24  
25 c) Align the qualifications and standards for the qualification outcomes of Mental Health  
26 Professionals to the provisions of Republic Act No. 10968, otherwise known as the "Philippine  
27 Qualifications Framework Act";

28  
29 d) Revisit the organizational structure of the SUCs to provide competent and professional personnel  
30 who shall provide supervision and technical assistance to the guidance counselors;

31  
32 e) Review, revise and develop the duties and responsibilities of mental health professionals in  
33 accordance with laws governing their professions;

34  
35 f) Prepare a performance evaluation plan that considers the improvement of the efficiency and  
36 organizational effectiveness of each counselor: *Provided*, That each employee shall be informed regularly  
37 by their immediate supervisor of the evaluation of their performance; and

38  
39 g) Provide periodic training, aimed at retooling and upgrading the skills of mental health  
40 professionals.

41  
42 **SEC. 7. *Salary Scale.*** – The career and salary scales of mental health professionals in SUCs shall  
43 provide for a gradual progression from a minimum to a maximum salary by means of regular increments,  
44 to be given regularly based on merit and competencies.

45  
46 The entry level of mental health professionals shall not be lower than Salary Grade 16. Mental health  
47 professionals hired by SUCs as Psychometricians shall be hired at Salary Grade 11 at the entry level.

1       **SEC. 8. *Contractual Hiring of Mental Health Personnel.*** – In case of a scarcity of mental health  
2 professionals who are available to work on a full-time basis in a Mental Health Office, the concerned  
3 SUC may hire qualified professionals on a contractual or part-time basis, subject to the evaluation and  
4 approval of the DBM.  
5

6       **SEC. 9. *Benefits.*** – All mental health professionals employed in the various Mental Health Offices  
7 shall enjoy the rights, privileges, and other benefits provided in Republic Act No. 7305, otherwise known  
8 as the “Magna Carta of Public Health Workers”, Republic Act No. 11036, otherwise known as the  
9 “Mental Health Act”, and other pertinent laws.  
10

11       **SEC. 10. *Appropriations.*** – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be  
12 included in the Annual General Appropriations Act.  
13

14       **SEC. 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of  
15 this Act, the CHED shall, in coordination with the DOH, the Philippine Association of State Universities  
16 and Colleges, and other concerned stakeholders, issue rules and regulations to govern the hiring, training  
17 and deployment of guidance counselors, psychologists and other mental health service personnel in  
18 SUCs, and for the implementation of this Act.  
19

20       **SEC. 12. *Suppletory Application.*** – The applicable provisions of Republic Act No. 11036, otherwise  
21 known as the “Mental Health Act”, insofar as they are not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act,  
22 shall apply suppletorily.  
23

24       **SEC. 13. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the  
25 remainder of this Act or any provision not affected, shall remain in full force and effect.  
26

27       **SEC. 14. *Repealing Clause.*** – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of  
28 instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this  
29 Act is repealed, modified or amended accordingly.  
30

31       **SEC. 15. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official*  
32 *Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,