

# History of Mental Health in the Philippines: A Response to the Call to Revolutionize Mental Health Services Toward Positive Well-being

Dear Editor,

A recent correspondence called to revolutionize mental health services to cultivate positive well-being. The paper underscores cultural factors (i.e. religion) and the collaboration of public and private institutions to address the mental health gap.<sup>[1]</sup> However, to fully understand mental health promotion it is essential to review historical factors [Figure 1]. This will allow scholars to observe the trend of mental health services and policies in the country.

The National Center for Mental Health (NCMH) and the Philippine General Hospital, Department of Psychiatric are two main national government institutions in the Philippines that lead psychiatric and psychological services.<sup>[2]</sup> The Philippine Mental Health Association is a leading private and nonstock mental health institution that provides affordable outpatient mental healthcare (i.e., psychiatric consultations, psychological assessment, and psychotherapy). Amidst the enactment of four laws in terms of professionalizing psychology and guidance and counseling, mental health, and universal healthcare. In Table 1 it was shown the mental health programs in the progress of mental health services and the profession remain stagnant.<sup>[3]</sup> Specifically, the Philippine Mental Health Act was signed as a law in 2018,<sup>[4]</sup> 90 years after the establishment of the NCMH. Earlier psychology was professionalized with the passing of the Philippine Psychology-Law in 2010. Public mental health services have been provided since 1918, but the healthcare structure in terms of laws, facilities, and professionals remains insufficient and stagnant.

Looking into the Donabedian Framework the Philippines [Figure 1] has a limited structure and processes in terms of professionals, funding, and facilities.<sup>[5]</sup> The government needed to pay more attention to the implementation of the laws and the allocation of sufficient funding for the mental health of the population. The private sector may support the government by abiding by the government’s administrative orders, policies, and frameworks. Even stagnant, the future of mental health in the Philippines remains hopeful.

### Acknowledgments

The author would like to acknowledge the guidance and inspiration from the Hopelab at De La Salle University, Manila.

### Financial support and sponsorship

Nil.

### Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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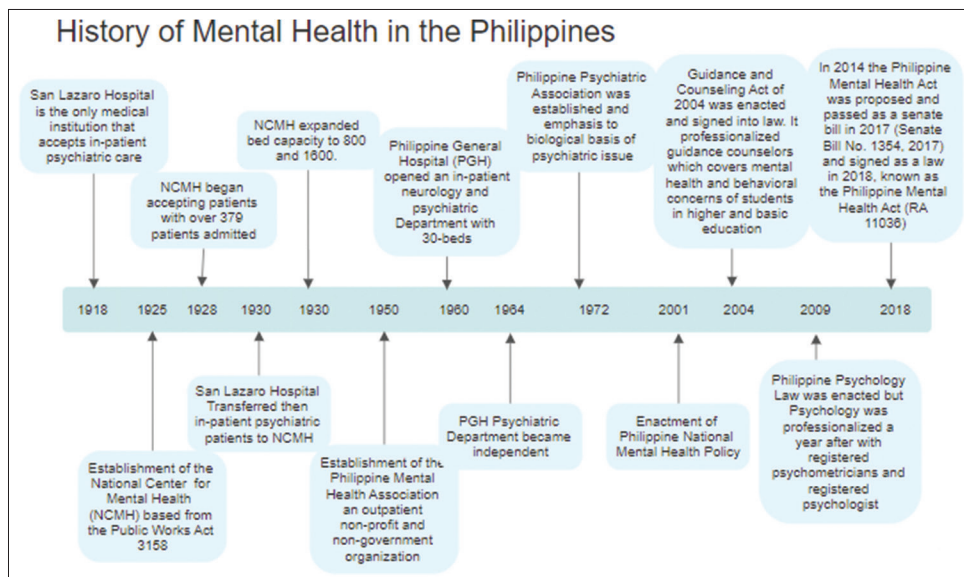


Figure 1: Timeline mental health structure in the Philippines

**Table 1: Philippines mental healthcare<sup>[3,4]</sup>**

Structure	Process	Output
<p>Laws</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mental Health Act 2010</li> <li>Universal Health Care Act 2019</li> </ul>	<p>Task force and framework for mental health promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Philippine Council for Mental Health</li> <li>Philippines Mental Health Framework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive mental health</li> <li>Mental health promotion for the population</li> </ul>
<p>Professionals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registered Psychologist - Psychological Assessment and Psychotherapy</li> <li>Registered Psychometricians - Psychological Testing</li> <li>Registered Guidance Counselors – Counseling and Mental Health Promotion in Schools</li> <li>Psychiatrist – Medical Intervention and Approach</li> </ul>	<p>Mental Health Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Psychological Assessment, Psychotherapy, Counseling, Medical Interventions</li> </ul>	
<p>Facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>217 outpatient and 155 inpatient facilities</li> </ul>	<p>Facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.13:100,000 bed ratio for the population</li> </ul>	

**Received:** 28 Dec 23 **Accepted:** 23 Feb 24

**Published:** 30 Aug 2024

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<p><b>Quick Response Code:</b></p> 	<p><b>Website:</b> www.ijpvmjournal.net/www.ijpm.ir</p>
	<p><b>DOI:</b> 10.4103/ijpvm.ijpvm_362_23</p>

**How to cite this article:** Embalsado JV. History of mental health in the Philippines: A response to the call to revolutionize mental health services toward positive well-being. *Int J Prev Med* 2024;15:40.

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