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SENATE
S. No. 1858

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator MARK A. VILLAR

AN ACT
INSTITUTING A NATIONAL HEALTH PROGRAM TO COMBAT SYSTEMIC
LUPUS ERYTHEMATOSUS (SLE) DISEASE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Section 15, Article II of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides:

"The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health and consciousness among them."

Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE) is a severe auto-immune connective tissue disease in which antibodies are generated to a range of autoantigens. It triggers inflammation in the different tissues of the body particularly when the immune system attacks its own tissue. There is no cure for SLE however medical interventions and lifestyle changes can help control it.

The proposed bill seeks to promote awareness and information for the public regarding SLE and to strengthen research and development to support and manage treatment of this disease. The increased awareness will encourage understanding, early detection and intervention which are critical in alleviating symptoms

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



MARK A. VILLAR

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

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

1 Sec 1. *Short Title.* – This act shall be known as the "*Comprehensive Lupus*
2 *Prevention Act.*"

3 Sec. 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is the policy of the State to protect and promote
4 the right to health of the people. As such, the State shall promote awareness of the health
5 programs focusing on Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE) to empower citizens suffering
6 therefrom to become, to the best of their potential, independent, self-reliant, and
7 productive members of society.

8 Sec. 3. *Definition of Terms.* - For the purpose of this Act. "Systemic Lupus
9 Erythematosus" (SLE) or "Lupus" shall be construed to mean a chronic autoimmune
10 disease where the immune system attacks the body's cells and tissue, resulting in
11 inflammation and tissue damage in different parts of the body, but most often affecting
12 the heart, joints, skin, lungs, blood vessels, liver, kidneys, and nervous system, as
13 diagnosed by a competent medical practitioner.

1 Sec. 4. *National Survey and Research.* - The National Institute of Health (NIH) of
2 the Department of Health (DOH) shall conduct an annual survey to determine the extent
3 and total incidence and prevalence of persons with SLE in the country for the government
4 to provide the necessary health interventions to address the needs faced by persons with
5 lupus.

6 Sec. 5. *Integrated Approach to Research in Cooperation with Concerned Research*
7 *Agencies.* - Within six (6) months from the date of effectivity of this Act, the DOH shall
8 ensure that there is no conflict of interest between the NIH's research agenda and that
9 of pharmaceutical corporations or other government agencies addressing the issue of
10 lupus.

11 Sec. 6. *National Program for Lupus Prevention and Treatment.* – The DOH shall
12 implement a comprehensive and nationwide program on lupus prevention and
13 treatment with the following objectives:

- 14
- 15 a) to promote and provide mechanisms for early identification, screening, and
16 diagnosis of persons suffering from lupus;
 - 17 b) to promote public awareness, education, and information on issues
18 concerning lupus;
 - 19 c) to establish sustainable support network for families of persons diagnosed
20 with lupus;
 - 21 d) to provide referral services to patients for appropriate educational and
22 medical expertise and to identify appropriate education or medical facilities
23 suited to the needs of patients;
 - 24 e) to undertake research and collaborate with other institutions for the conduct
25 of research activities pertaining to the disease;
 - 26 f) to promote an advocacy discouraging bias against and stereotyping of
27 afflicted persons;
 - 28 g) to provide an avenue for the sharing of best practices on issues relating to
29 early detection, prevention, cure, treatment, and rehabilitation of persons
30 diagnosed with lupus; and

1 h) to network with other organizations, institutions, and professionals working
2 on public programs for persons diagnosed with lupus;

3 *Sec. 7. Programs and Service for Lupus Prevention.* -- The programs and services
4 that will be provided by the DOH shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- 5 a) orientation and counseling services for families of newly diagnosed persons;
6 b) establishment of national and regional referral services where the DOH shall
7 maintain an updated list of health care institutions and practitioners concerned
8 with the treatment of lupus;
9 c) publish a newsletter on current developments and research on lupus, as well as
10 other reading materials on the early detection, prevention, and treatment of
11 lupus, and best practices for the care of diagnosed persons;
12 d) conduct of continuing education and training programs on the proper care of
13 diagnosed persons; and
14 e) establishment of a databank and an information and monitoring system on
15 country-specific statistics pertaining to lupus.

16
17 *Sec. 8. Lupus Early Detection and Screening Fees.* -- The Philippine Health Insurance
18 Corporation shall include the cost of early detection and screening programs for lupus as
19 one of the available benefits to its members. The early detection and screening test fees
20 shall be applied to, among others, testing cost, education, follow-up, and readable
21 overhead expenses.

22 *Sec. 9. Donations and Grants.* - The DOH, NIH, and other departments of the
23 DOH that may thereafter be tasked with the implementation of this Act shall have the
24 power to receive donations and grants from local and international donor institutions,
25 foundations, and foreign donor agencies, provided that pertinent laws and rules on the
26 receipt, accounting, and disbursement thereof shall be complied with.

27 *Sec. 10. National Lupus Awareness Week.* - In order to grow national interest
28 and participation in the issues and concerns of lupus patients, the first week of May
29 shall annually be celebrated as "Lupus Awareness Week." This week-long activity will

1 be spearheaded by the DOH, in coordination with other concerned agencies,
2 institutions, and stakeholders.

3 Sec. 11. *Continuing Education and Training of Health Personnel and Service*
4 *Providers on Lupus Prevention and Treatment.* - All DOH staff and health providers
5 providing health services to persons diagnosed with lupus shall undergo a mandatory
6 continuing education and training program to ensure the delivery of up-to-date and
7 relevant services.

8 Sec. 12. *Protection Against Forcible Administration of Medical Treatment or*
9 *Enrollment in Programs.* - All persons administering treatment, counseling, or
10 medication as well as all persons involved in the implementation of the DOH programs
11 as mandated in this Act shall respect the right of each patient to determine for himself
12 or herself the medical treatment to be administered as well as the programs wherein
13 he or she will participate, if any.

14 Sec. 13. *Appropriations.* - The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of
15 this Act shall be included and incorporated in the annual general appropriations of
16 the DOH.

17 Sec. 14. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within six (6) months from the
18 date of effectivity of this Act, the DOH shall promulgate the necessary implementing
19 rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

20 Sec. 15. *Repealing Clause* - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules
21 and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with provisions of this Act are hereby
22 repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

23 Sec. 16. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision or part of this Act is declared
24 unconstitutional or invalid, the remainder of this Act or any provision not affected shall
25 remain in full force and effect.

26 Sec. 17. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
27 publication in the Official Gazette or two (2) newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,