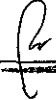


FIFTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

SENATE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

10 SEP 28 P1:44

SENATE
S. No. 2545

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Retinoblastoma is a cancer which develops in the cells of the retina, the light sensitive layer of the eye. It may occur at any age, but usually occurs in younger children. In fact, retinoblastoma is the most common primary ocular malignancy (eye cancer) of childhood.

Worldwide, the incidence of retinoblastoma is recorded to be about 11 cases per one million children younger than 5 years. A more commonly used estimate is one case of retinoblastoma per 18,000-30,000 live births, depending on the country. In the Philippines, unpublished reports have estimated the incidence to be more than one case of retinoblastoma per 18,000 live births.¹

Early diagnosis and intervention is critical to the success of the treatment of this disease. The major goal of treatment is to save the patient's life, and secondarily, to salvage the eye and vision if possible. If untreated, retinoblastoma is almost always fatal. It can spread outside the eye to the brain, the central nervous system and the bones. In a study where children stricken with the disease were diagnosed very late and had already developed tumors outside of the eye, eighty-seven percent (87%) of children died, who were mostly from developing countries.

However, most children who begin treatment before the retinoblastoma has spread beyond the eye are cured. Great strides have been made in treating retinoblastoma in recent years; many children retain their vision and more than 95 percent of children with retinoblastoma can be cured.

¹ Marichelle Aventura Isidro, MD, Consulting Staff, Department of Ophthalmology, Santo Tomas University Hospital of Manila, Philippine Heart Center *Retinoblastoma* available at: <http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/1222849-overview>, September 2010.

Given this information, it is incumbent upon the State to assist parents in taking the necessary precautions. The Constitution, Article 2, Section 15, provides:

SEC. 15. The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.

Thus this bill directs the Department of Health to develop a comprehensive program that would not only increase awareness of retinoblastoma but also improve access to various treatment options.*

ass. 
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

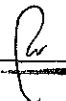
* This bill was originally filed during the Thirteenth Congress.

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1 AN ACT
2 TO DIRECT THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH TO ESTABLISH
3 A RETINOBLASTOMA PUBLIC AWARENESS AND PREVENTION PROGRAM

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

4 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Retinoblastoma Awareness
5 Act."

6 SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - The State shall protect and promote the right to
7 health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.

8 SECTION 3. *Retinoblastoma Awareness and Prevention Program.* - The Secretary of
9 Health shall establish a retinoblastoma awareness and prevention program that shall include -

10 (A) Public and community awareness programs concerning the prevention and
11 identification of retinoblastoma;

12 (B) The development of strategies to educate parents about retinoblastoma, early
13 warning signs, and risk factors based on the best available medical information and to encourage
14 parents to discuss retinoblastoma with their child's physician.

15 (C) Increased accessibility to all treatment options for retinoblastoma and the provision
16 of services for children, adolescents, and adults with retinoblastoma.

17 SECTION 4. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - The Secretary shall, after public
18 consultations, prepare and disseminate the Implementing Rules and Regulations of this Act not
19 later than six (6) months from the approval of this Act.

20 SECTION 5. *Appropriation.* - To carry out the provisions of this Act, such amount as
21 may be necessary is hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National Treasury.

1 Thereafter, the amount necessary for the establishment of a retinoblastoma public awareness and
2 prevention program shall be included in the annual appropriation of the Department of Health.

3 SECTION 6. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or
4 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain
5 valid and subsisting.

6 SECTION 7. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive
7 order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or is inconsistent
8 with the provision of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

9 SECTION 8. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
10 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

11 Approved,