

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

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SENATE
S. B. No. 94

Introduced by Senator Luisa "Loi" P. Ejercito Estrada

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article 2, Section 14, provides:

"The State recognizes the role of women in nation building, and shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men."

Certain diseases, disorders, and conditions are peculiar to, more serious, or more prevalent in women. For this reason, the factors of medical risk or type of medical *intervention are different for them.*

Unfortunately, the government fails to meet women's health needs. Perhaps, due to its failure to understand that women have unique health conditions, the government could not provide health programs, specially designed for women.

To address this issue, this bill seeks to establish an Office on Women's Health within the Department of Health in order to:

- (1) establish short-range and long-range goals and objectives and coordinate all activities within the Department of Health that relate to disease prevention, health promotion, service delivery, research, and public and health care professional education concerning women;
- (2) provide expert advice and consultation to the Secretary concerning scientific, legal, ethical, and policy issues relating to women's health; and
- (3) monitor the Department of Health offices, agencies, and regional activities regarding women's health and coordinate and stimulate activities of such departmental and agency offices on women's health.

In view hereof, immediate approval of this proposed measure is highly recommended.


LUIZA "LOI" P. EJERCITO ESTRADA
Senator

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**AN ACT
ESTABLISHING AN OFFICE ON WOMEN'S HEALTH WITHIN THE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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

SECTION 1. **Short Title.** – This Act shall known as the “Women’s Office Act.”

SECTION 2. **Definition.** – As used in this section the term “women’s health conditions”, with respect to women of all age ethnic, and racial groups, means all diseases, disorders, and conditions---

- (1) unique to, more serious, or more prevalent in women; and
- (2) for which the factors of medical risk or type of medical intervention are different for women, or for which it is unknown whether such factors or types are different for women.

SECTION 3. **Health Office On Women’s Health.** – There is established within the Office of the Secretary of the Department of Health, an Office on Women’s Health (hereafter referred to in this section as the “Office”). The Office on Women’s Health shall be headed by an Assistant Secretary in an ex officio capacity.

SECTION 4. **Duties.** – The Office shall, with respect to the health concerns of women ---

- (1) establish short-range and long-range goals and objectives and coordinate all activities within the Department of Health that relate to disease prevention, health promotion, service delivery, research, and public and health care professional education concerning women;
- (2) provide expert advice and consultation to the Secretary concerning scientific, legal, ethical, and policy issues relating to women's health;
- (3) monitor the Department of Health offices, agencies, and regional activities regarding women's health and coordinate and stimulate activities of such departmental and agency offices on women's health;
- (4) establish a Department of Health Coordinating Committee on Women's Health to be chaired by an Assistant Secretary for Women's Health which shall be composed of senior level representatives from each of the agencies and offices of the Department of Health;
- (5) establish a National Women's Health Information Center to --
 - (A) facilitate the exchange of information regarding matters relating to health information and health promotion, preventive health services, research advances, and education in the appropriate use of health care;
 - (B) facilitate access to such information;
 - (C) assist in the analysis of issues and problems relating to the matters described in this paragraph; and
 - (D) provide technical assistance with respect to the exchange of information (including facilitating the development of materials for such technical assistance);

- (6) coordinate efforts to promote women's health programs and policies in the private sector;
- (7) through publications and any other means appropriate, provide for the exchange of information between members of the Office, grantees of the Office, and the general public.
- (8) determine the current Agency level of activity regarding women's health across age, biological, and sociocultural contexts, in all aspects of the Department's work, including drafting clinical practice guidelines, and conducting research into patient outcomes, delivery of health care services, and access to health care;
- (9) establish short-range and long-range goals and objectives for research important to women's health and coordinate all other activities within the Department that relate to health services and medical effectiveness research;
- (10) identify projects in women's health that should be conducted or supported by the Department;
- (11) consult with health professionals, nongovernmental organizations, consumer organizations, women's health professionals, and other individuals and groups, as appropriate, on the Department's policy with regard to women; and
- (12) identifying the need for such research, and making an estimate each fiscal year of funds needed to adequately support the research.

SECTION 5. *Grants And Contracts Regarding Duties.* – In carrying out the office's duties, the Secretary, acting through the Office, may make grants to, and enter into cooperative agreements, contracts, and inter-agency agreements with public and nonprofit private entities, agencies, and organizations.

SECTION 6. *Evaluation And Dissemination.* – The Office shall directly or through contracts with public and private entities, agencies, and organization, provide for evaluations of projects carried out with financial assistance provided under the preceding section and for the dissemination of information developed as a result of such projects.

SECTION 7. *Reports.* – Not later than January 31 of each year, the Secretary shall prepare and submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report describing the activities carried out under this act during the period for which the report is being prepared.

SECTION 8. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 9. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provision of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

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

Approved,

GVL/slee billsI violet/women's health office act