

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

'04 JUN 30 P4:20

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S E N A T E

S. No. 337

Introduced by Senator S. R. Osmeña III

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Unpaid hospital bills is a common problem, especially among low income families. It is unfortunate that some hospitals and medical clinics often find it expedient to address this problem by preventing the release of fully recovered patients unless they fully or partially pay their hospital bills. While the collection of hospital bills is a legitimate concern, this response simply compounds the problem because the patient's extended stay causes his hospital bills to grow even higher.

On the side of the patient, this is tantamount to a violation of the constitutional proscription against imprisonment for non-payment of debt.

This bill seeks to strike a compromise acceptable to both the hospitals/medical clinics on one hand and to financially distressed patients on the other hand, without unnecessarily jeopardizing the rights of either party.

In view of the foregoing, early passage of this bill is earnestly requested.

S. Osmeña III

SERGIO OSMEÑA III
Senator

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AN ACT
PROHIBITING THE DETENTION OF PATIENTS IN HOSPITALS AND
MEDICAL CLINICS ON GROUNDS OF NON-PAYMENT OF HOSPITAL BILLS
OR MEDICAL EXPENSES

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

1 SECTION 1. It shall be unlawful for any hospital or medical clinic in the
2 country to detain or otherwise cause directly or indirectly the detention of patients
3 who have fully recovered or have been adequately attended to for non-payment,
4 in part or in full, of hospital bills or medical expenses.

5 SECTION 2. Patients who have fully recovered and who already wish to
6 leave the hospital or medical clinic but are financially incapable to settle in part or
7 in full their hospitalization expenses, including professional fees and medicines,
8 shall be allowed to leave the hospital or medical clinic, subject to the execution of
9 promissory note to the extent of the unpaid obligation. The promissory note shall
10 be co-signed by another individual acceptable to the hospital or medical clinic
11 who shall be jointly and solidarily liable with the patient for the unpaid obligation.

12 SECTION 3. Any person found guilty of violating Section 1 hereof shall be
13 punished with *arresto mayor* and fined in the amount not exceeding Six
14 Thousand Pesos (P6,000.00) at the discretion of the Court. In case of an
15 incorporated hospital or medical clinic, its Medical Director or in his absence, its
16 President shall be held liable for the violation of this Act.

1 SECTION 4. All laws, executive orders, resolutions, ordinances, and
2 any rules and regulation which may be inconsistent with the provisions of this Act
3 are hereby deemed repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

4 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days of its
5 publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,