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SENATE  
S. No. **2641**

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*[Signature]*

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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AN ACT  
TO PROVIDE FOR RESEARCH WITH RESPECT TO LYME DISEASE  
AND OTHER TICK-BORNE DISEASES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article 3, Section 15 provides:

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

Lyme disease is an inflammatory disorder that is transmitted by ticks. The disease causes fatigue and malaise, and in worse cases, arthritis, neurologic abnormalities, and heart block.<sup>1</sup>

In April 2014, the World Health Organization (WHO) issued an alert that more than half of the world's population was at risk of getting vector-borne diseases such as Lyme disease, malaria, dengue, leishmaniasis, schistosomiasis and yellow fever transmitted by insects such as mosquitoes, flies, and ticks and other vectors such as water snails.

The WHO called for a renewed focus on vector control and provision of safe water, sanitation, and hygiene tools, which were among the key strategies for the control, elimination, and eradication of neglected tropical diseases.

Vector-borne diseases, such as Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases, affect the poorest populations, particularly in areas where there is a lack of adequate housing, safe drinking water, and sanitation. Malnourished people and those with weak immune system are susceptible to these diseases.

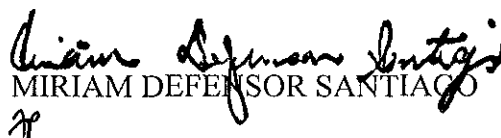
According to the WHO, within the past two decades, many vector-borne diseases reemerged or spread to other parts of the world. This was attributed to environmental changes,

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cebudoctorsuniversity.edu/2013/colleges/medicine/hospital/cardio/chua92.html>

increase in international travel and trade, changes in agricultural practices, and rapid unplanned urbanization.<sup>2</sup>

This bill provides for government research for Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases to control and prevent these diseases.

  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO  
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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2014/04/04/1308584/small-bite-big-threat-who-issues-vectors-alert>

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SENATE  
S. No. 2641

RECEIVED BY: J.

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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

AN ACT  
TO PROVIDE FOR RESEARCH WITH RESPECT TO LYME DISEASE  
AND OTHER TICK-BORNE DISEASES

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act may be cited as the “Tick-Borne Disease Research Accountability and Transparency Act.”

SECTION 2. *Research.* – The Secretary of Health shall conduct or support epidemiological, basic, translational, and clinical research regarding Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases.

SECTION 3. *Working Group.* – (a) Establishment. – The Secretary of Health shall establish a permanent working group, to be known as the Interagency Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Working Group (hereinafter referred to as “Working Group”), to review all efforts within the Department of Health concerning Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases to ensure interagency coordination, minimize overlap, and examine research priorities.

(b) Responsibilities. – The Working Group shall—

(1) not later than 24 months after the date of enactment of this Act, and every 24 months thereafter, develop or update a summary of—

(A) ongoing Lyme disease and other tick-borne disease research related to causes, prevention, treatment, surveillance, diagnosis, diagnostics, duration of illness, intervention, and access to services

- 1 and supports for individuals with Lyme disease or other tick-borne  
2 diseases;
- 3 (B) advances made pursuant to such research;
- 4 (C) the engagement of the Department of Health with persons that  
5 participate at the public meetings required by paragraph (5); and
- 6 (D) the comments received by the Working Group at such public  
7 meetings and the Secretary's response to such comments;
- 8 (2) ensure that a broad spectrum of scientific viewpoints is represented in  
9 each such summary;
- 10 (3) monitor national government and local government activities with respect  
11 to Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases;
- 12 (4) make recommendations to the Secretary regarding any appropriate  
13 changes to such activities; and
- 14 (5) ensure public input by holding annual public meetings that address  
15 scientific advances, research questions, surveillance activities, and  
16 emerging strains in species of pathogenic organisms.
- 17 (c) Membership. —
- 18 (1) In general. — The Working Group shall be composed of a total of fifteen  
19 (15) members as follows:
- 20 (A) Members from the government. — Seven (7) members  
21 consisting of one or more representatives of each of—
- 22 (i) the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health;
- 23 (ii) the Food and Drug Administration;
- 24 (iii) the National Center for Disease Prevention and Control;
- 25 and
- 26 (iv) such other agencies and offices of the Department of  
27 Health as the Secretary determines appropriate.

1 (B) Non-government public members. – Seven (7) non-government  
2 public members, consisting of representatives of the following  
3 categories:

4 (i) Physicians and other medical providers with experience in  
5 diagnosing and treating Lyme disease and other tick-borne  
6 diseases.

7 (ii) Scientists or researchers with expertise on Lyme disease  
8 and other tick-borne diseases.

9 (iii) Patients and their family members.

10 (iv) Nonprofit organizations that advocate for patients with  
11 respect to Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases.

12 (v) Other individuals whose expertise is determined by the  
13 Secretary to be beneficial to the functioning of the Working  
14 Group.

15 (2) Appointment. – The members of the Working Group shall be appointed by  
16 the Secretary.

17 (3) Diversity of scientific perspectives. – In making appointments under  
18 paragraph (2), the Secretary shall ensure that the non-government public  
19 members of the Working Group represent a diversity of scientific  
20 perspectives.

21 (4) Terms. – The non-government public members of the Working Group  
22 shall each be appointed to serve a four (4)-year term and may be  
23 reappointed at the end of such term.

24 (d) Meetings. – The Working Group shall meet as often as necessary, as determined  
25 by the Secretary, but not less than twice each year.

26 (e) Reporting. – Not later than twenty-four (24) months after the date of enactment of  
27 this Act, and every twenty-four (24) months thereafter, the Working Group—

28 (1) shall submit a report on its activities, including an up-to-date summary  
29 under subsection (b) (1) and any recommendations, to the Secretary;

- 1           (2)    shall make each such report publicly available on the website of the  
2                   Department of Health; and
- 3           (3)    shall allow any member of the Working Group to include in any such  
4                   report minority views.

5           SECTION 4. *Strategic Plan.* – Not later than three (3) years after the date of enactment of  
6 this Act, and every five (5) years thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a strategic  
7 plan, informed by the most recent summary under this Act, for the conduct and support of Lyme  
8 disease and tick-borne disease research, including—

- 9           (a)    proposed budgetary requirements;
- 10          (b)    a plan for improving outcomes of Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases,  
11 including progress related to chronic or persistent symptoms and chronic or persistent infection  
12 and co-infections;
- 13          (c)    a plan for improving diagnosis, treatment, and prevention;
- 14          (d)    appropriate benchmarks to measure progress on achieving the improvements  
15 described in paragraphs (b) and (c); and
- 16          (e)    a plan to disseminate each summary under this Act and other relevant information  
17 developed by the Working Group to the public, including health care providers, public health  
18 departments, and other relevant medical groups.

19          SECTION 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days from  
20 effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Health shall promulgate the necessary rules and  
21 regulations to implement this Act.

22          SECTION 6. *Appropriations.* – The funds needed to implement this Act shall be sourced  
23 from the regular appropriations of the Department of Health.

1           SECTION 7. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision, or part hereof, is held invalid or  
2   unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain  
3   valid and subsisting.

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

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

Approved,

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