

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Third Regular Session)



'16 JAN 28 P3:39

SENATE
S. No. 3158

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

AN ACT
DIRECTING THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH TO ESTABLISH
A RETINOBLASTOMA PUBLIC AWARENESS AND PREVENTION PROGRAM

EXPLANATORY NOTE

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.

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 five 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 In the Philippines, unpublished reports have estimated the incidence to be more than one case of retinoblastoma per 18,000 live births.¹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

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.

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.

Given this information, it is incumbent upon the State to assist parents in taking the necessary precautions.

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.²


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO
at

² This bill was originally filed during the Thirteenth Congress, Second Regular Session and refiled during the Fifteenth Congress, First Regular Session.

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Office of the Secretary

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

1 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "Retinoblastoma
2 Awareness Act."

3 SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State shall protect and promote the
4 right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.

5 SECTION 3. *Retinoblastoma Awareness and Prevention Program.* – The
6 Secretary of Health shall establish a retinoblastoma awareness and prevention program
7 that shall include –

8 (A) Public and community awareness programs concerning the prevention and
9 identification of retinoblastoma;

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

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

1 SECTION 4. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Secretary shall, after
2 public consultations, prepare and disseminate the Implementing Rules and Regulations of
3 this Act not later than six (6) months from the approval of this Act.

4 SECTION 5. *Appropriation.* – To carry out the provisions of this Act, such
5 amount as may be necessary is hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National
6 Treasury. Thereafter, the amount necessary for the establishment of a retinoblastoma
7 public awareness and prevention program shall be included in the annual appropriation of
8 the Department of Health.

9 SECTION 6. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or
10 unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other
11 provisions hereof.

12 SECTION 7. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, and issuances, or
13 portions thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby
14 repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

15 SECTION 8. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after
16 its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

/clr7Dec2015