

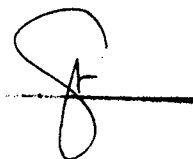
EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE )  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
First Regular Session )



20 MAR -9 P5:21

SENATE  
S. B. No. 1407

RECEIVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_



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Introduced by **SENATOR IMEE R. MARCOS**

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**AN ACT  
EXPANDING THE RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR TROPICAL MEDICINE, AND  
FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article II, Section 15 of the 1987 Constitution provides that "*the State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.*"

In 1981, President Ferdinand E. Marcos issued Executive Order No. 674, creating the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM), intended to be the prime biomedical research institute for the control of communicable diseases in the country. Its function was two-tiered: primarily, to conduct research on endemic communicable diseases in the country and to provide quality tertiary care to both in-patients and out-patients suffering from such tropical diseases.

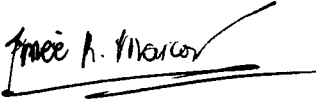
Today, a forty-year (40) old Executive Order, it hardly contemplates the slew of pandemics that have plagued the country in the past decade, such as the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), the Middle East respiratory syndrome corona virus (MERS-CoV), and the corona virus disease (COVID-19).

In the absence of a law clearly addressing the now-global epidemic of COVID-19 and other tropical communicable diseases, a level of confusion has pervaded

government's response strategies and plagued its information dissemination. The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) was suddenly compelled to issued Memorandum Circular No. 2020-023 on 06 February 2020, requiring the identification and designation of a barangay isolation unit (BIU) for each barangay in the country, a near-impossible order for these tiny LGU's. Many observers have lately decried DOH's *laissez-faire* attitude in the handling of COVID-19 cases in the country, exemplified by its decision to delegate to LGU's the handling of passengers of the Diamond Princess cruise ship inspite of confirmed COVID-19 cases on board.

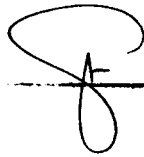
As the research hospital specialized in communicable diseases, the RITM should finally be institutionalized and expanded to the regions in order to undertake a more proactive role, providing scientific bases, treatment protocols, and detailed implementing rules and regulations to LGU's, other national agencies, and the general public. Given the magnitude of the impact of COVID-19, this bill asserts the urgency of RITM establishing regional branches in the key population centers of the country such as Cebu and Davao.

Thus, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

  
**IMEE R. MARCOS**

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**EXPANDING THE RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR TROPICAL MEDICINE, AND**  
**FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

1 **Section 1. Short Title.** – This act shall be known as the “Research Institute for  
2 Tropical Medicine (RITM) Act.”

3 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – It is the policy of the State to promote the health  
4 and well-being of its citizens. Given that communicable diseases constitute most of  
5 the leading cause of morbidity and mortality in the country, the State prioritizes  
6 national development in the field of health and shall endeavor to create a strong  
7 biological research component necessary for the effective pursuit of programs for the  
8 control of communicable diseases.

9 **SEC. 3. The Research Institute for Tropical Medicine.** – There is hereby created a  
10 Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM) that will provide the biomedical  
11 research support and treatment for communicable disease control program in the  
12 Philippines to be established in Metro Manila. There shall also be RITM regional  
13 centers to be established in places as may be determined by its Advisory Board.

14 **SEC. 4. Scope and Coverage.** – For purposes of this Act, the scope and coverage of  
15 tropical medicine shall pertain to diseases that are specific to the tropics, which is

1 the geographical area between the tropic of Cancer and the tropic of Capricorn, and  
2 for diseases that present differently in this geographical region as compared to other  
3 regions, whether it originated or has been transmitted to the country, to wit: corona  
4 virus disease (COVID-19), Middle East respiratory syndrome corona virus (MERS-  
5 CoV), severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), ebola virus, influenza A virus  
6 subtype (H1N1), gastrointestinal infections, viral hepatitis, bacterial and non-  
7 bacterial respiratory infections, amoebiasis, schistosomiasis, filariasis, malaria,  
8 pertussis, diphtheria, tetanus, meningitis, meningismus, measles, mumps, herpes,  
9 chicken pox, rocky mountain spotted fever, encephalitis, echo-viral diseases, coxa-  
10 chie-viral diseases, and Philippine hemorrhagic fever: *Provided*, That the Secretary of  
11 the Department of Health (DOH) may include such other pertinent diseases in  
12 consultation with the Advisory Board herein created.

13 **SEC. 5. *Organization.*** – The RITM shall be directly under the control and supervision  
14 of the DOH. It shall be headed by a Director who shall be assisted by an Assistant  
15 Director, to be appointed by the Secretary of Health. The Director shall be  
16 responsible for the implementation of policies and the immediate management of  
17 the programs and operations of the Institute.

18 It shall also have technical and administrative support staff as well as  
19 consultants, as may be necessary. Such consultants may be drawn from the private  
20 sector on consultancy or contractual basis and shall be granted honoraria or  
21 allowances at such amounts as may be determined in accordance with existing rules  
22 and regulations.

23 It may also call upon experts in the public sector in the performance of its  
24 mandate.

25 **SEC. 6. *Advisory Board.*** – The RITM shall have an Advisory Board composed of the  
26 following:

- 27 a. The Secretary of Health as the Chairman;
- 28 b. The Executive Director of the Philippine Council for Health Research and  
29 Development (PCHRD) as Member; and

1 c. A designated representative from the Philippine Medical Association (PMA) as  
2 Member.

3 **SEC. 7. Powers and Functions.** – The RITM shall have the following powers and  
4 functions:

5 a. Undertake research activities in the diagnosis, control, and prevention of tropical  
6 diseases that are major causes of mortality and morbidity in the Philippines;

7 b. Conduct clinical trials aimed at better understanding and control of tropical  
8 disease;

9 c. Conduct regular training courses for medical and paramedical personnel in the  
10 control of common tropical diseases in the country;

11 d. Provide high quality tertiary care and treatment to both inpatients and out-patients  
12 suffering from tropical diseases included within the scope of RITM's research  
13 activities;

14 e. Arrange for the participation of the PCHRD and the PMA in the planning and  
15 implementation of the programs of RITM;

16 f. Apply for, receive, and accept bequests, grants, and donation of funds, equipment,  
17 materials and services needed for the attainment of its objectives; and

18 g. Perform such other related activities as may be assigned by the Secretary of  
19 Health.

20 **SEC. 8. Authority to Use Income.** – The RITM shall be authorized to generate its  
21 income and use the same pursuant to its mandate under this Act.

22 **SEC. 9. Appropriations.** - The amount necessary to implement the provisions of this  
23 Act shall be included in the Annual General Appropriations Act (GAA).

24 **SEC. 10. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – The Department of Health  
25 (DOH), together with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), the  
26 Philippine Council for Health Research and Development (PCHRD), and the  
27 Philippine Medical Association (PMA), shall promulgate the necessary

1 implementing rules and regulations within sixty (60) days upon the effectivity  
2 of this Act.

3 **SEC. 11. *Separability Clause.*** - If for any reason any provision of this Act is declared  
4 unconstitutional or invalid, such parts or portions not affected thereby shall remain  
5 in full force and effect.

6 **SEC. 12. *Repealing Clause.*** - All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees,  
7 presidential proclamations, letters of instruction, rules and regulations or parts  
8 thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or  
9 modified accordingly.

10 **SEC. 13. *Effectivity.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete  
11 publication in the Official Gazette and in at least two (2) newspapers of general  
12 Circulation.

Approved,