

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

Office of the Secretary

'22 FEB 17 P 4 :47

SENATE
S. No. 2507

RIEL... 

Introduced by Senator Francis "Tol" N. Tolentino

AN ACT
EXPANDING THE COVERAGE OF THE MANDATORY BASIC IMMUNIZATION
FOR ALL INFANTS AND CHILDREN UP TO ELEVEN (11) YEARS OF AGE,
AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10152, OTHERWISE
KNOWN AS THE "MANDATORY INFANTS AND CHILDREN HEALTH
IMMUNIZATION ACT OF 2011"

Explanatory Note

On 7 February 2022, the Philippine government started vaccinating children ages 5 to 11 years old against COVID-19. The Pfizer vaccine is being used for these children as it is the only vaccine that has received emergency use authorization for the 5 to 11 age group from the country's Food and Drug Administration (FDA). As of 12 February 2022, a total of 52,262 children aged 5 to 11 years old have been inoculated against COVID-19. The government expects that around 1.5 million children aged 5 to 11 years old will receive the vaccine.

According to the Health Technology Assessment Council (HTAC), the independent advisory body to the Department of Health (DOH) and the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), created under Republic Act (RA) No. 11223, from March 2020 to January 2022, there were 110,609 COVID-19 and 1,916 confirmed hospitalization among children 5 to 11 years old. There was a notable increase in cases and hospitalization among this age group during the Omicron wave in January 2022. While it is difficult to determine the real burden of the disease on the pediatric population due to limited testing, limited contact tracing, poor reporting, and other issues, the HTAC found that the potential adverse health outcomes of the disease in children justified pediatric vaccination against COVID-19. These health adverse complications include multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C) and "long COVID" or the persistence of COVID-19 symptoms even after


recovery among children, and in rare cases, severe COVID-19 leading to hospitalization and deaths.

RA 10152, otherwise known as the "Mandatory Infants and Children Health Immunization Act of 2011," provides for the mandatory basic immunization for all infants and children up to 5 years of age against the following diseases: tuberculosis; diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis; poliomyelitis; measles; mumps; rubella or German measles; hepatitis-B; H. influenza type B (HIB); and such other types as may be determined by the Secretary of Health in a department circular.

The mandatory immunization under RA No. 10152 only covers children up to 5 years of age. Hence, there is a need to amend the law to expand the coverage to children up to 11 years of age to prevent policy confusion as the government continues to roll out the COVID-19 vaccine for children 5 to 11 years old. This will also enable the government to protect the right to health of children in the face of future pandemics.

In the United States, Pfizer recently announced that it is postponing its application with the United States Food and Drug Administration for the approval of its COVID-19 vaccine for children between 6 months and 4 years old. The pharmaceutical company said it will wait for data from a study evaluating administering a third dose two months after the second dose, which may provide a higher level of protection in this age group.

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



FRANCIS "TOL" N. TOLENTINO

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

Section 1. Section 3 of Republic Act No. 10152, otherwise known as the
"Mandatory Infants and Children Health Immunization Act of 2011," is hereby
amended as follows:

"SEC. 3. *Coverage.* – xxx.

The mandatory basic immunization shall be given for free at
any government hospital or health center to infants and
children up to five (5) **ELEVEN (11)** years of age.

xxx."

Section 2. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, and
regulations or parts thereof which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed,
amended, or modified accordingly.

1 Section 3. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
2 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in at least two (2) newspapers of general
3 circulation.

Approved,