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Senate
Office of the Secretary

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SENATE

S. No. 1427

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by SENATOR RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.

**AN ACT
CREATING THE PHILIPPINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND
PREVENTION, DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The world has been ravaged by the global health pandemic brought about by the 2019 novel CoronaVirus (2019-nCoV) or "COVID-19," which has infected more than 572.24 million people in the world and killed more than 6.39 million. In the Philippines, there are already 3,995,967 confirmed cases and 63,814 deaths as of 24 October 2022. It is timely and in the nation's best interest to join the global fight in combating infectious diseases and other potential health threats, by creating a competent National Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

On 29 July 2022, the first confirmed case of Monkeypox was already detected in the country, only a week later, it was declared a global health emergency by the World Health Organization (WHO). In 2019 alone, the country was deluged with various disease outbreaks, including dengue, diphtheria, measles and polio. The recent onslaught of communicable diseases in the country have resulted in a high and alarming morbidity and mortality rates that calls for a focused and timely response.

Clearly, despite the existing structures and staff under the Department of Health (DOH), there are gaps in capacity to undertake and coordinate a range of interventions to monitor disease patterns, investigate outbreaks, conduct research and provide adequate facilities needed to prevent and control these public health emergencies.

With these circumstances, the bill aims to establish the Philippine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, which shall serve as the principal disease surveillance agency of the country, tasked to monitor the nation's health in order to prevent, protect and manage diseases through networks of scientists and practitioners with the proven expertise in public health, epidemiology, medicine and other allied disciplines.

Considering that this measure is one of the priority legislations of President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos, Jr., the immediate passage of this bill is urgently sought.



RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.



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*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 "*Philippine Center for Disease*
2 *Control and Prevention (PCDC) Act.*"

3 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared the policy of the State:

- 4 a. To protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health
5 consciousness among them;
- 6 b. To adopt, support, establish and maintain an effective health mechanism
7 responsive to the country's health, needs, emergency and other emerging
8 health problems;
- 9 c. To ensure the health and well-being of Filipinos and protect them from
10 infectious diseases, chronic diseases and other public health threats;
- 11 d. To prevent the emergence and transmission of serious and communicable
12 diseases; and
- 13 e. To establish a health protection agency and framework that will increase the
14 health security of the Filipinos and protect them from diseases and other
15 public health threats.

16 In implementing these policies, the Government shall devote significant resources
17 to provide for an effective disease control and prevention program through a high-level

1 public institution imbued with the capacity, competence and authority to address public
2 health risks.

3 Sec. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act, the following terms shall mean:

- 4 a. *Communicable or Infectious diseases* – infectious diseases or illnesses
5 due to infectious agents or their toxic products, which may be
6 transmitted from a reservoir to a susceptible host, either directly as from
7 an infected person or animal or indirectly through the agency of an
8 intermediate plant or animal host, vector, or the inanimate environment;
- 9 b. *Disease* – an illness due to a specific toxic substance, occupational
10 exposure or infectious agent, which affects a susceptible individual,
11 either directly or indirectly, as from an infected animal or person, or
12 indirectly, through an intermediate host, vector, or the environment;
- 13 c. *Disease control* – the reduction of disease incidence, prevalence,
14 morbidity or mortality to a locally acceptable level as a result of
15 deliberate efforts and continued intervention measures to maintain the
16 reduction;
- 17 d. *Disease surveillance* – the ongoing systematic collection, analysis,
18 interpretation, and dissemination of outcome-specific data for use in the
19 planning, implementation, and evaluation of public health practice. It
20 includes the functional capacity for data analysis and timely
21 dissemination of these data to persons who can undertake effective
22 prevention and control activities;
- 23 e. *Emerging or re-emerging diseases* – are diseases that have recently
24 appeared within a population or those whose incidence or geographic
25 range is rapidly increasing or threatens to increase in the near future,
26 that:
- 27 i. Have not occurred in humans before;
- 28 ii. Have occurred previously but affected only small numbers of
29 people in isolated areas;
- 30 iii. Are caused by previously undetected or unknown infectious
31 agents;

- iv. Are due to mutant or resistant strains of a causative organism or bacteria; and
- v. Re-emergence of agents whose incidence of disease had significantly declined in the past, but whose incidence of disease has reappeared.
- f. *Epidemic or outbreak* – an occurrence of disease in in excess of normal expectancy within a specific place or group of people over a given period of time;
- g. *Epidemiology* – the study of the distribution and determinants of health-related states or events (including disease), and the application of this study to the control of diseases and other health problems;
- h. *Executive Director* – refers to the Executive Director of the PCDC;
- i. *Notifiable disease* – a disease that, by legal requirements, must be reported to the public health authorities;
- j. *Pandemic* – an epidemic that is spread over multiple countries or continents;
- k. *Public health emergency* – refers to an occurrence or imminent threat of an illness or health condition that is caused by any of the following: bioterrorism, appearance of a novel or previously controlled or eradicated infectious agent or biological toxin; a natural disaster; a chemical attack or accidental release; and nuclear attack or accident; and poses a high probability of any of the following: large number of deaths or serious injuries or long-term disabilities in the affected population; widespread exposure to an infectious or toxic agent that poses a significant risk of substantial harm to a large number of people in the affected population and a significant risk to the health of citizens of other countries; or trade and travel restrictions.
- l. *Response* – actions to break the chain of transmission, prevent or manage diseases that affect groups or populations.

Sec. 4. *Creation of the Philippine Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.* –

There is hereby created an independent body to be known as the Philippine Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, hereinafter referred to as "PCDC".

1 The PCDC shall be the country's epidemiology and surveillance body sufficiently
2 funded and equipped with a network of high containment laboratories that can
3 develop tests and processes to limit the spread of microbes that could negatively
4 impact on the population;

5 The PCDC shall be the principal agency tasked to identify, assess and
6 communicate present and emerging threats to human health posed by diseases of
7 national and international significance and other health risks of public concern.

8 The PCDC shall be an attached agency of the Department of Health (DOH) for
9 policy and program coordination. It shall have a separate budget under the General
10 Appropriations Act (GAA).

11 *Sec. 5. Functions.* – The PCDC shall have the following functions:

- 12 a. Undertake real-time surveillance and maintain data to establish trends
13 and to inform the government and the public of health risks, threats and
14 emergencies;
- 15 b. Lead the investigation of disease outbreaks and other threats to public
16 health as these relates to national interest;
- 17 c. Develop and maintain a network of reference/specialized high
18 containment laboratories for control of outbreaks and epidemics;
- 19 d. Support the development of protocols for preparedness and response to
20 biological, chemical, radiation and nuclear events;
- 21 e. Coordinate work on the International Health Regulations and engage in
22 efforts to protect global health security;
- 23 f. Develop networks of stakeholders in public health and epidemiology at
24 national and local levels;
- 25 g. Coordinate relevant health sectors on the preparation and response to
26 public health emergencies and disasters in the country, including
27 networking and liaising with relevant establishments within and outside
28 the Philippines, pursuant to the functions of PCDC;
- 29 h. Engage in efforts to advance biotechnology, including the development
30 of tests for new microbes, collaborate in clinical trials for vaccines and
31 develop long term strategies for pandemic preparedness and response;

- 1 i. Set the standards and the process for the establishment of Epidemiology
2 and Surveillance Units, as required under Section 8 of Republic Act No.
3 11332, and assist DOH-retained hospitals, local health facilities and
4 private hospitals and laboratories in establishing ESUs and assess their
5 performance;
6 j. Lead the training of field epidemiologists through the Philippine Field
7 Epidemiology Training Program and the Field Management Training
8 Program; and,
9 k. Perform such functions as may be mandated by law or duly delegated
10 by relevant authorities, as well as those that may be necessary or
11 expedient for the performance of its functions under this Act.

12 *Sec. 6. Local Centers and Field Offices.* – PCDC shall have local centers and field
13 offices with a system of laboratories and an appropriate number of high level
14 containment laboratories geographically dispersed across the Philippines.

15 *Sec. 7. Executive Director.* –

- 16 a. *Appointment.* The PCDC shall be headed by an Executive Director, with
17 the rank of Undersecretary, who shall be appointed by the President,
18 upon the recommendation of the Secretary of Health, on the basis of
19 technical expertise, academic background and appropriate work
20 experience.
21 b. *Eligibility.* The Executive Director shall be a public health professional
22 with at least 10 years of exemplary achievements in the fields of public
23 health, epidemiology and/or medicine. The Executive Director should
24 have solid experience in the management of public health emergencies.
25 The Executive Director shall also possess at minimum, a Masters Degree
26 in Epidemiology or Public Health or its equivalent.
27 c. *Tenure.* To ensure and uphold the independence of PCDC, the Executive
28 Director shall have security of tenure and shall not be removed from
29 office unless for just cause.
30 d. *Removal.* The Executive Director may be removed from office by the
31 President of the Philippines, as evaluated and recommended by the Chair

1 of Civil Service Commission and Secretary of Health on the following
2 grounds:

- 3 i. Inefficiency and incompetence in the performance of official
4 duties; and
- 5 ii. Inability to discharge the duty of the office, whether arising from
6 the infirmity of the mind or body, grave misconduct or for public
7 interest.

8 Sec. 8. *Staffing Pattern.* – The Secretary of Health, in consultation with the
9 public health experts and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), shall
10 determine the qualification standards, staffing pattern and compensation, in
11 accordance with existing laws, rules and regulations.

12 Sec. 9. *Emergency Operation Center.* – There shall be established an
13 Emergency Operations Center (EOC) linked to other emergency operations centers
14 of the Department of Health, the Office of Civil Defense, other national agencies and
15 local government units (LGUs).

16 Sec. 10. *Early Warning and Response System.* – The PCDC shall operate an
17 Early Warning and Response System, which will ensure that the national government
18 and LGUs are able to respond in a timely and coordinated manner to emerging health
19 threats in the country.

20 The PCDC shall take action to ensure that the early warning and response
21 system is efficiently and effectively linked with other forms of community alert
22 systems.

23 Sec. 11. *Public Health Surveillance Program.* - The PCDC may institute public
24 health surveillance programs or undertake epidemiological investigations or surveys
25 of people, animals or vectors in order to determine the existence, prevalence or
26 incidence, or to determine the likelihood of a possible outbreak, of any infectious
27 disease; or any other disease which the PCDC or the Secretary of Health, by
28 notification in the *Official Gazette* and in the official website of PCDC and the DOH,
29 declares to be a disease which this section applies.

30 For the purpose of any public health surveillance program, epidemiological
31 investigations, the Executive Director may issue an order requiring any person to
32 furnish PCDC, within the period stated therein, with such information as may be

1 required and any sample of any substance or matter in the possession of or control of
2 that person, whether taken pursuant to this Act or otherwise, as may be considered
3 appropriate.

4 Sec. 12. *Obligation of Local Government Units* - Local government units (LGUs)
5 must provide the PCDC, in a timely manner, available health and technical data
6 relevant to the prevention and control of diseases.

7 Sec. 13. *Merging of Existing Related Health Bureaus and Units to PCDC.* - In
8 consonance to the promotion of streamlined public health service delivery of the
9 existing structures and staff of the Epidemiology Bureau, Disease Prevention and
10 Control Bureau, Bureau of Quarantine, and the Research Institute for Tropical
11 Medicine of the DOH shall be absorbed in PCDC.

12 Sec. 14. *Measures in the event of inadequate local control of communicable*
13 *diseases.* – Whenever the PCDC, through its Executive Director, determines that the
14 measures taken by the LGUs are insufficient to prevent the outbreak of an infectious
15 disease or spread of any of the communicable diseases, the PCDC may take over
16 public health functions of a locality to prevent such spread of the diseases as PCDC
17 deems reasonably necessary, including inspection, disinfection, sanitation, pest
18 extermination, and destruction of animals or articles believed to be vectors of
19 infection.

20 Sec. 15. *Regular Publication of Reports.* – The PCDC shall publish regular
21 reports for the public and will provide a monthly status update on notifiable diseases
22 by locality. Special reports and bulletins on emerging and re-emerging diseases will
23 be published as the needs arise.

24 Sec. 16. *Detailed Cost Work Plans.* – The PCDC shall submit annual detailed cost
25 work plans relating to its functions to the Secretary of Health for approval.

26 Sec. 17. *Appropriations.* – The initial appropriation needed for the
27 implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.
28 The funds to be appropriated for the PCDC shall be a distinct and separate budget
29 item from the regular appropriation for DOH and shall be administered by the
30 Executive Director.

1 Sec. 18. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act shall be declared
2 unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not otherwise affected shall remain in
3 full force and effect.

4 Sec. 19. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, orders, rules and regulations, other
5 issuances, or parts thereof, inconsistent with any provision of this Act, are hereby
6 repealed or modified accordingly.

7 Sec. 20. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following
8 its complete publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of general
9 circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,