

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

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SENATE
S. No. 1676

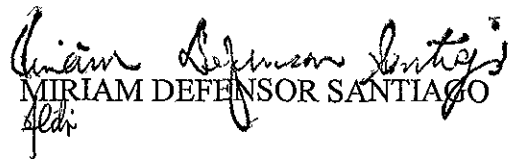
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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Visually impaired seniors are more prone to falls, burns, bouts of depression and are more likely to need assistance with activities of daily living. Subsequently, they are more likely to become reliant on personal care services and costly medical services. By intervening in a timely fashion and linking the senior to appropriate services, the State can assist in maintaining the senior citizens' health and welfare as well as quality of life.

This bill seeks to establish a Senior Vision Services program which would provide comprehensive services to elderly persons who suffer from functional visual impairments. The services would include client assessment, information and referral for health care services, client and family counseling and education, and technical assistance for human services agencies without experience serving the blind or visually impaired. Elderly persons would be eligible for services if they suffered from a visual impairment that substantially interfered with their ability to perform routine daily tasks, even if they were not regarded as "legally blind."*


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

* This bill was originally filed during the Thirteenth Congress, Third Regular Session.

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1 AN ACT
2 CREATING A PROGRAM OF SENIOR VISION SERVICES FOR
3 ELDERLY PERSONS WITH FUNCTIONAL VISION IMPAIRMENTS

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

6 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Senior Vision Services Act of
7 2007.”

8 SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to promote the general
9 welfare of the people. Pursuant to this policy, it shall establish a national program of senior
10 vision services for elderly persons with functional visual impairments

11 SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the term

12 (A) “Senior vision services” means the provision of non-vocational services to elderly
13 persons who have a functional visual impairment. These services may include, but not
14 be limited to, client assessment, information and referral, client and family
15 counseling, referrals for ophthalmological, optometric or other health care services,
16 technical assistance and training for human services personnel to serve persons who
17 are blind or visually impaired, and low vision screening;

18 (B) “Functional visual impairment” means an impairment of sight that substantially
19 interferes with an elderly person’s ability to perform specific daily living skills and
20 tasks. Persons who are not regarded as legally blind, pursuant to this paragraph, but
21 who experience such an impairment of sight, shall be deemed eligible for senior
22 vision services pursuant to this section;

23 (C) “Elderly” means an individual over sixty (60) years of age; and

1 (D) "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Department of Health.

2 SECTION 4. *Senior Vision Services.* – There is hereby established a program of senior
3 vision services for elderly persons with functional visual impairments. Such program shall be
4 under the direction of the Secretary of the Department of Health.

5 In providing senior vision services, the Secretary shall take into consideration the lack of
6 non-traditional and non-vocational services for elderly persons in need of senior vision services
7 and the availability of such senior vision services to establish or to expand existing blind or
8 visually impaired services currently provided or available in the region. He or she shall likewise
9 ensure that due consideration is given to the geographic and existing service demands for senior
10 vision services within a region.

11 SECTION 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from the
12 promulgation of this Act, the Secretary shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations
13 necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

14 The Secretary shall submit a report to the House of Representatives and the Senate, prior
15 to, but in no event later than, December thirty-first, in the year following enactment of this Act,
16 and annually thereafter, which shall include, but not be limited to:

17 (A) Financial reports of the project operations established pursuant to this Act;

18 (B) An analysis of the project's ability to provide such senior vision services to elderly
19 persons with functional visual impairments;

20 (C) Recommendations on the continuation of such program and the need for program
21 expansion, if appropriate;

22 (D) Other information deemed necessary.

23 SECTION 6. *Funding for Senior Vision Services.* – The funds to be used for the senior
24 vision services shall be allocated from the annual 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 Clause.* -- This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
8 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

9 Approved,

/rgs