


FOURTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF THE PHILIPPINES  
First Regular Session

7 OCT 30 1973

SENATE  
S.B. 1800

RECEIVED BY 


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Introduced by Senator Villar

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### Explanatory Note

Vitamin A deficiency is one of the major causes of childhood blindness. The lack of it results in the weakening of a child's immune system and hence, makes them susceptible to sickness.

The following table summarizes the national nutrition situation in the Philippines:

#### NATIONAL NUTRITION SITUATION

Category	Age Group	
	0-5	6-10
Underweight	27 %	26 %
Underheight	30 %	36 %
Vitamin A deficiency	40 %	N/a

The table shows that Vitamin A deficiency is at 40 % in the first stage. Whilst the data is not available for the second phase of a child (at age 6-10), it is widely believed that this condition will worsen.

The Philippines is in the list of countries (that included Bangladesh, Nepal, Cambodia, Indonesia and Sierra Leone) with high mortality rates among children resulting from Vitamin A deficiency and malnutrition. Many children are also blind due to lack of Vitamin A.

This legislation mandates that all Filipino infants and children below the age of seven must be provided and given free Vitamin A supplementation. The same is significant as the number and size of brain cells grow during the first four years and cognitive development commences in children.

Early recognition of this bill is earnestly sought.



MANNY VILLAR

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**AN ACT  
MANDATING THE FREE ADMINISTRATION OF VITAMIN A  
SUPPLEMENTATION AMONGST INFANTS AND FILIPINO CHILDREN  
BELOW THE AGE OF SEVEN (7), PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR  
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

SECTION 1. To eliminate malnutrition and the rising statistics on the occurrence of childhood blindness, Vitamin A Supplementation (VAS) shall be administered mandatorily for infants and Filipino children, free of charge.

The Department of Health (DOH) in cooperation and consultation with relevant groups including the national association of pediatrics, parents and civil society, academe, shall issue the necessary implementing rules and regulations that may contain the following areas of concern but not limited to:

- a. the recommended best time, age, administration and dosage for infants and children;
- b. vaccination/supplementation safety;
- c. allowed exemptions and treatment of high-risk children;
- d. accessible and registered health practitioners and institutions allowed to administer Vitamin A supplementation;
- e. partnering with private organizations on the full implementation of this Act.

SECTION 2. The sum of fifty million (Php 50,000,000.00) is hereby authorized to be appropriated out of any funds in the National Treasury not otherwise appropriated to carry out the free of charge Vitamin A Supplementation mandated under this Act. Thereafter, the sum needed to continue the program of supplementation shall be included in the annual budget of the Department of Health.

The Department shall submit to Congress an annual report which shall include, among other things, policy recommendations which require legislative action towards the total eradication of malnutrition and childhood blindness.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation, whichever comes earlier.

Approved,