


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

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SENATE  
S. No. **1946**

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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EXPLANATORY NOTE

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), also known as Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDDs), cause severe and pervasive impairment in thinking, feeling, language, and the ability to relate to others. These disorders are usually first diagnosed in early childhood and range from a severe form, called autistic disorder, through pervasive development disorder not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS), to a much milder form, Asperger syndrome. They also include two rare disorders, Rett syndrome and childhood disintegrative disorder.\*

There is no single best treatment package for all children with ASD. Decisions about the best treatment, or combination of treatments, should be made by the parents with the assistance of experts. In some cases, however, the cost of treatment is prohibitive. Hence, this bill seeks to provide parents and their children access to treatment by requiring health insurers to provide full coverage not only for treatment but also the prevention, early detection and diagnosis of ASD.

  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO


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\* <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/autism-spectrum-disorders-pervasive-developmental-disorders/index.shtml>

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FILED MAY 2011 

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1 AN ACT  
2 REQUIRING HEALTH INSURERS TO PROVIDE FULL COVERAGE FOR THE  
3 PREVENTION, EARLY DETECTION, DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT OF  
4 AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

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

7 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Autism Prevention, Early  
8 Detection, Diagnosis and Treatment Act of 2007.”

9 SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is a policy of the State to protect the physical,  
10 moral and social well-being of the people. Towards this end, the State shall exert efforts to make  
11 treatment for autism spectrum disorder more accessible to those with such ailment by requiring  
12 health insurers to provide full coverage for its prevention, early detection, diagnosis and  
13 treatment.

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

- 15 (A) “Autism spectrum disorder” means a neurobiological condition that includes autism,  
16 Asperger syndrome, Rett’s syndrome, or pervasive developmental disorder;  
17 (B) “Department” means the Department of Health; and  
18 (C) “Secretary” means the Secretary of Health.

19 SECTION 4. *Creation of an Advisory Panel on Health Insurance Coverage for Autism*  
20 *Spectrum Disorder.* – (A) There is hereby established within the Department of Health an  
21 advisory panel on health insurance coverage for autism spectrum disorder. Such panel shall be  
22 composed of nine (9) members who are experts in health care and appointed as follows: Seven  
23 (7) members who are officers or employees of the Department of Health with a background in

1 mental health or mental retardation and developmental disabilities shall be appointed by the  
2 President; and the Senate President and the Speaker of the House shall each appoint a member  
3 who is a representative of an autism advocacy group.

4 (B) Each member shall serve a term of two (2) years. The President shall designate the  
5 Chair of the panel from among his or her appointees. Vacancies in the membership of the panel  
6 shall be filled in the manner provided for original appointments.

7 The members of the panel shall receive no compensation for their services but shall be  
8 allowed their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties pursuant  
9 to this Act.

10 (C) The advisory panel on health insurance coverage for autism spectrum disorder shall  
11 annually, on or before September first, compile and submit to the Secretary a list of successful  
12 treatment and therapy options for autism spectrum disorder that will be required to be covered  
13 pursuant to this Act.

14 (D) Within forty-five (45) days of receipt of each list submitted pursuant to Paragraph C  
15 of this Section, the Secretary shall, on an emergency basis, promulgate and implement rules and  
16 regulations requiring coverage for the treatment and therapy options included in each such list.

17 *SECTION 5. Creation of an Autism and Health Insurance Coverage Hotline. – Within*  
18 *one hundred eighty (180) days of the submission of the initial list to the Secretary pursuant to*  
19 *Section 4(C) of this Act, the Department shall establish and operate an autism and health*  
20 *insurance coverage hotline. The hotline shall be a toll-free, twenty-four (24) hour a day*  
21 *consumer call center for families with autistic children who have complaints about or questions*  
22 *on insurers and coverage for autism spectrum disorder. All complaints received by such hotline*  
23 *shall be documented and referred to the appropriate official in the department for corrective*  
24 *action.*

25 (B) The Department may contract with a qualified non-profit corporation for the  
26 provision and operation of the hotline required by this Section. Any such contract shall only be  
27 awarded after the Department has conducted a request for proposals process. The Department  
28 shall select a non-profit corporation which has the resources and ability to operate a statewide

1 hotline, and is staffed by employees and/or volunteers with strong experience in autism spectrum  
2 disorder.

3 (C) If the Department elects to establish and operate the hotline using its own personnel  
4 and resources, such hotline shall be staffed by officers and employees with strong experience in  
5 autism spectrum disorder. Until the Civil Service Commission shall have established civil  
6 service titles and competitive examinations for positions as employees of the hotline, the  
7 Secretary is authorized and directed to appoint and employ such qualified officers and  
8 employees as shall be necessary to operate the autism and health insurance coverage hotline.

9 (D) The Secretary is authorized to promulgate and implement any rules and regulations  
10 necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

11 SECTION 6. *Separability Clause.* – If any part hereof, is held invalid or unconstitutional,  
12 the remainder of the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

13 SECTION 7. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive  
14 order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent  
15 with, the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

16 SECTION 8. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
17 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

18 Approved,

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