

**SENATE**

S. No. 1029

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Introduced by Senator Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Section 15, Article II of the 1987 Constitution provides that the State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.

Age-related Macular Degeneration - or AMD - is an eye disease that causes loss of central vision, leaving only peripheral, or side, vision intact. It affects the macula, the part of the eye that is utilized when one is reading, aiming, following moving objects or any other activity where clear and sharp vision is required. Although AMD causes no pain to the patient, it will result in visual loss and legal blindness among the elderly if left untreated. It is the leading cause of visual loss among people aged 60 and above, and one of the top 10 causes of disability among the elderly worldwide.

The greatest risk factor of AMD is age. Although AMD may occur during middle age, studies show that people over age 60 are clearly at greater risk than other age groups. Other risk factors include smoking, obesity, diet, and pollution

Although age poses the greatest risk factor in the determination of AMD, many Filipinos believe that with ageing follows vision loss and that the same is incurable. As such, there is a need to provide an information, education and communication (IEC) campaign to educate the general public on the benefits of availing comprehensive eye examination for AMD.

By passing this piece of legislation, our government recognizes the daily plight of our hundreds of families struggling every day with family members suffering from vision loss due to AMD, and once and for all acknowledges it as a health issue in the country.

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



**MANUEL "LITO" M. LAPID**  
*Senator*

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**AN ACT**  
**INSTITUTING A COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL PROGRAM TO**  
**MITIGATE AND COMBAT AGE-RELATED MACULAR**  
**DEGENERATION, IMPLEMENTING A NATIONWIDE INFORMATION,**  
**EDUCATION, COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN, APPROPRIATING**  
**FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

**SECTION 1. Short Title.** - This Act shall be known as the "**Comprehensive Age-Related Macular Degeneration Prevention and Mitigation Act of 2010**".

**SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** - It is the policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people.

Towards this end, the State commits itself to the establishment of institutional and social mechanisms to support persons with Age-related Macular Degeneration. It shall institutionalize a comprehensive national to mitigate and combat Age-related Macular Degeneration for purposes of empowering and providing them quality of life.

**SEC. 3. Annual Survey Programs.** - The National Institute of Health (NIH) of the Department of Health (DOH) is hereby mandated to conduct an annual survey program to determine the extent and total incidence and prevalence of persons with Age-related Macular Degeneration in order to provide necessary health interventions to address the needs faced by persons with Age-related Macular Degeneration.

The NHI shall carry out a program to expand and intensify research to develop innovative advanced technologies to Age-related Macular Degeneration detection, diagnosis, and treatment comparable to state-of-the-art technologies.

**SEC. 4. National Program for Age-related Macular Degeneration Awareness, Education, Prevention and Rehabilitation.** - The DOH is hereby mandated to implement a comprehensive and nationwide program on Age-related Macular Degeneration awareness, education, prevention and rehabilitation.

Towards this end, the DOH is hereby mandated to implement the following objectives:

- a) to promote public awareness, education and information on issues concerning the medical condition;
- b) to establish sustainable networks of support group for families of persons inflicted with the medical condition;
- c) to provide referral services to patients and identify appropriate educational and medical expertise and facilities suited to the needs of the patients;
- d) to combat the spectrum of disorders related to the condition through education, early intervention, prompt referrals for treatment and services;
- e) to undertake research and/or collaborate with other entities on research activities regarding Age-related Macular Degeneration;
- f) to receive donations and grants from local and international donor institutions, foundations, and multilateral and bilateral foreign donor agencies involved in the prevention, cure and rehabilitation of persons with Age-related Macular Degeneration;
- g) to provide the avenue for exchange of information, exchange programs and sharing of best practices on issues relating to the early detection, prevention, cure, treatment and rehabilitation of persons with Age-related Macular Degeneration; and

h) to network with other organizations, institutions and professionals working for the promotion of legislation and public programs for afflicted persons.

It shall carry out a program on Age-related Macular Degeneration which shall educate and inform elderly who are sixty (60) years of age or older on the need to periodically undergo comprehensive eye examination.

The national campaign shall include the development and distribution of written educational materials, and the development and placing of public service announcements that are intended to encourage the elderly to seek comprehensive eye examination and to create awareness on the need for improved technologies for Age-related Macular Degeneration detection and minimally invasive treatment.

In developing the national campaign under this Act, the DOH shall recognize and address racial, cultural and ethnic disparities in the incidences of Age-related Macular Degeneration.

**SEC. 5. Programs and Services for Age-Related Macular Degeneration Prevention.** - The programs and services that will be provided by the DOH shall include, among others, the following:

- a) Establishment of National and Regional Referral Services where the DOH will update a list of health care institutions concerned with the care and rehabilitation of patients with Age-related Macular Degeneration;
- b) Publication of reading materials for the medical condition's early detection, prevention, rehabilitation and care;
- c) The conduct of continuing education, information and training programs and lectures on the proper handling of afflicted persons;
- d) The establishment of a databank and information and monitoring system (IMS) on the demographic, socio-economic and incidence and prevalence of afflicted persons in the country; and

e) The conduct of continuing education/training of families, teachers, therapists and caregivers of persons with Age-related Macular Degeneration through seminars, conventions and other forms of tri-media educational tools.

**SEC. 6. Age-related Macular Degeneration Detection and Screening Fees.** — The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PHIC) shall include the cost of early detection and comprehensive eye examination for Age-related Macular Degeneration as one of the available benefits to its members.

The early detection and eye examination fee shall be applied to, among others, testing costs, education, follow-up and readable overhead expenses. These early detection and examination are designed to identify persons who should receive more intensive diagnosis or assessment in order to improve the health and well-being of the patient.

**SEC. 7. National Awareness Week for Age-related Macular Degeneration Prevention and Mitigation.** – In order to mainstream the issues and concerns of the elderly with Age-related Macular Degeneration, the first week of September of every year is hereby declared as the “**Age-related Macular Degeneration Awareness Week**”. This week shall be celebrated nationwide so that stakeholders can celebrate and increase public awareness on the prevalence and incidence of Age-related Macular Degeneration in the country. The week-long activity will be spearheaded by the Department of Health (DOH).

**SEC. 8. Appropriation.** - The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included and incorporated in the annual general appropriations of the Department of Health (DOH) and the National Institute of Health (NIH).

**SEC. 9. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).** - Within six (6) months from the date of effectivity of this Act, the DOH shall promulgate necessary implementing rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

**SEC. 10. Repealing Clause.** - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof not consistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

**SEC. 11. Separability Clause.** - If any provision or part of this Act, or the application thereof to any person or circumstance, is held unconstitutional or invalid, the remainder of this Act shall not be affected thereby.

**SEC. 12. Effectivity Clause.** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days from the date of its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

**Approved,**