


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

OFFICE OF THE CLERK

9 FEB 23 P1:44

**SENATE**

S. No. 3084

RECEIVED BY: 

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Introduced by Senator Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Article 13, Section 12 of the 1987 Constitution provides that the State shall undertake appropriate health manpower development and research, responsive to the country's health needs and problems.

One of the areas which needs a comprehensive research is the disease called Asperger's syndrome. Asperger's syndrome is a developmental disorder that affects a child's ability to socialize and communicate effectively with others. Children with Asperger's syndrome typically exhibit social awkwardness and an all-absorbing interest in specific topics. Conservative estimates indicate that two out of every 10,000 children have Asperger's syndrome, and boys are three to four times as likely as girls to have the disorder. While there is no cure for Asperger's syndrome, treatment can help children learn how to interact more successfully with their peers.

Asperger's syndrome is also called Asperger's disorder, Asperger's or AS. It is characterized by difficulties in social interaction and restricted, stereotyped patterns of behavior and interests. Asperger syndrome is distinguished by a pattern of symptoms rather than a single symptom. It is characterized by qualitative impairment in social interaction, by stereotyped and restricted patterns of behavior, activities and interests, and by no clinically significant delay in cognitive development or general delay in language. Intense preoccupation with a narrow subject, one-sided verbosity, restricted prosody, and physical clumsiness are typical of the condition, but are not required for diagnosis.

Asperger's syndrome is named after Austrian pediatrician Hans Asperger who, in 1944, described children in his practice who lacked nonverbal communication skills, demonstrated limited empathy with their peers, and were physically clumsy. There is no single treatment for Asperger syndrome, and the effectiveness of particular interventions is supported by only limited data. The mainstay of management is behavioral therapy, focusing on specific deficits to address poor communication skills, obsessive or repetitive routines, and physical clumsiness.

This proposed measure seeks to provide a comprehensive program for health research on Asperger's syndrome in the country and provide a national comprehensive information and education drive to inform the general public of the disorder.

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

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

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

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

9 FEB 23 P 1:44

**SENATE**

S. No. 3084

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Introduced by Senator Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid

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**AN ACT**  
**ESTABLISHING A COMPREHENSIVE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**  
**PROGRAM ON ASPERGER'S SYNDROME, APPROPRIATING FUNDS**  
**THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSE**

*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 "**Asperger's Syndrome Research and Development Act of 2009.**"

**SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people to full, healthy and holistic development and the right to self-determination. As such, the State shall promote an environment conducive to the development of all its citizens to become, to the best of their potentials, independent, self-reliant and productive members of society.

Towards this end, the State commits itself to the establishment of institutional mechanisms to provide quantitative and qualitative research on Asperger's Syndrome.

**SEC. 3. Definition of Terms.** - For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

(a) "**Asperger's Syndrome**" is an autism spectrum disorder in which there is no general delay in language or cognitive development but is characterized by difficulties in social interaction and restricted, stereotyped patterns of behavior and interests. Asperger's syndrome is also called Asperger's disorder, Asperger's or AS. It is characterized by difficulties in social interaction and restricted, stereotyped patterns of behavior and interests. Asperger's syndrome is distinguished by a pattern of symptoms rather than a single symptom. It is characterized by qualitative impairment in social interaction, by stereotyped and restricted patterns of behavior, activities and interests, and by no clinically significant delay in cognitive development or general delay in language.

- (b) *“Committee”* refers to the Committee on Asperger’s Syndrome Research;
- (c) *“Department”* shall refer to the Department of Health;
- (d) *“Secretary”* shall refer to the Secretary of the Department of Health.

**SEC. 4. *Comprehensive Research on Asperger’s Syndrome.*** - The Secretary of the Department of Health (DOH) is hereby mandated to conduct a comprehensive research and information drive on the incidence of Asperger’s Syndrome in the country. The Department is also mandated to support medical and epidemiological research activities to expand the knowledge and understanding of the said disorder in the country.

The DOH is mandated to strengthen its research focus concerning Asperger Syndrome, including a renewed investment into basic and clinical research, expanded research into the link between environmental factors and the disease, and continued investigations into causation, diagnosis, early detection and treatment for the same. Such factors that will be studied shall also include, among others, hormones and reproductive factors, genetic factors, socio-demographic factors, and others.

**SEC. 5. *Committee on Asperger’s Syndrome Research.*** - To assist the Secretary in receiving accurate and complete information about Asperger’s Syndrome, its symptoms, origin, classification, prevention and treatment, there is hereby established a Committee on Asperger’s Syndrome, to ensure the strategic management, communication, and oversight of the policy formation, research, and activities of the government regarding the disorder.

The Committee shall endeavor to:

- a) promote public awareness, education and information on issues concerning the disorder;
- b) establish sustainable networks of support groups for families of afflicted persons;
- c) provide referral services to individuals with the disorder and identify the appropriate educational and medical expertise and facilities suited to the needs of the patient;
- d) combat the spectrum of medical problems related to the syndrome through screening, education, early intervention, prompt referrals for treatment and services;
- e) undertake research and/or collaborate with other entities on research activities regarding the prevalence of the disorder in the Philippines;

f) receive donations and grants from international donor institutions, foundations, and multilateral and bilateral foreign donor agencies involved in research, prevention, cure and rehabilitation of persons with the disorder;

g) provide the avenue for exchange of information, exchange programs and sharing of best practices on issues relating to the early detection, prevention, and treatment of afflicted patients; and

h) ensure that materials concerning the syndrome are available, up to date, and responsive to reports of problems with Asperger's Syndrome, and that timely aggregate data concerning such reports shall be made available to the public upon request and consistent with existing confidentiality standards.

**SEC. 6. *Composition.*** - The Committee on Asperger's Syndrome Research shall be composed of the following members:

- (a) One (1) representative from the Department of Health (DOH);
- (b) One (1) representative from the National Institute of Health (NIH);
- (c) One (1) representative from duly accredited drug and vaccine manufacturers and distributors;
- (d) One (1) representative from the duly accredited association of hospitals in the Philippines;
- (e) One (1) representative from the duly accredited association of medical doctors in the Philippines; and
- (f) One (1) representative from the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in the advocacy for the prevention, cure and rehabilitation of persons with Asperger's Syndrome.

The Secretary of the Department of Health shall seat as the Chairperson for the Committee on Asperger's Syndrome Research.

**SEC. 7. *Meetings.*** - The Committee on Asperger's Syndrome Research shall meet at least once a month or as often as necessary upon the written request signed by two-thirds (2/3) of its members.

The presence of a majority of the members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum in order for it to conduct its business.

The meetings of the Committee shall be open to the public and shall be given the opportunity to speak and make presentations at such meetings.

Each member shall make a presentation to the full Committee at each meeting concerning the activities conducted by such member.

**SEC. 8. *Early Identification and Intervention for Persons with Asperger's Syndrome.*** – The Department is hereby mandated to establish a program for early identification, screening and detection of persons with Asperger's Syndrome.

**SEC. 9. *Prevention of Conflict of Interest in the Research Process.*** - Within six (6) month from the date of effectivity of this Act, the Department shall issue the necessary standards, guidelines and regulations in order to ensure that there is no conflict of interest between the research agenda of the researchers and the drug manufacturers or government agencies promoting the widespread usage of a particular vaccine or medicine for the treatment and rehabilitation of persons with Asperger's Syndrome.

It shall ensure the timely publication and dissemination of information of these guidelines and regulations in order to ensure that the various health providers and stakeholders all over the country are adequately informed.

**SEC. 10. *Appropriations.*** - To carry out the provisions of this Act, the funds necessary to implement the provisions of this Act shall be incorporated in the annual general appropriations of the Department of Health.

**SEC. 11. *Separability Clause*** - If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

**SEC. 12 *Repealing Clause*** - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provision of this act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

**SEC. 13. *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,***