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SENATE
S. No. **3129**

RE. ...
[Signature]

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article 2, Section 15 provides: "The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them."

According to the Philippine Glaucoma Foundation and Philippine Glaucoma Society, glaucoma is a group of diseases that cause gradual destruction of the optic nerve. The optic nerve is the cable that connects the eye to the brain. Optic nerve damage causes shrinking of the visual field and, eventually, blindness. It reportedly causes irreversible blindness. Unlike blindness caused by cataracts which can be reversed with cataract surgery, vision lost due to glaucoma is gone forever.

The Philippine Glaucoma Society states that glaucoma is the second leading cause of irreversible blindness in the world. One study estimates that 60.5 million people worldwide have glaucoma with 8.4 million of them blind in both eyes.¹ In the Philippines, glaucoma is the 3rd leading cause of blindness in both eyes and is the leading cause of irreversible blindness of both eyes.²

Glaucoma can occur at any age but by far the most commonly affected are older individuals. Persons with the following risk factors have a higher chance of developing or having glaucoma:

- Elevated intraocular pressure (eye pressure)
- Family history of glaucoma
- Age over 45
- Previous eye injury

¹ Quigley H, Broman AT. British Journal of Ophthalmology. 2006.

² Cubillan LDP, Olivar-Santos E. Philippine Journal of Ophthalmology. 2005.

- Chronic steroid use
- Diabetes mellitus
- People of Chinese ancestry

These persons should have themselves screened for glaucoma by an ophthalmologist (EyeMD).

Most cases of glaucoma have no symptoms or very subtle symptoms. Because the vision loss starts at the edges of the visual field (peripheral vision) and occurs gradually, many glaucoma sufferers do not realize that there is a problem until they have lost a large area of their vision.³

Thus, this bill seeks to establish a grant program to provide screenings for glaucoma to individuals determined to be at high risk for glaucoma.

Miriam Defensor Santiago
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO
acc.

³ <http://www.philglaucomasociety.org/assets/Glaucoma%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>

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SENATE
S. No. **3129**

REPORT BY: Rw

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

1 AN ACT
2 CREATING A GRANT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE SCREENINGS FOR GLAUCOMA TO
3 INDIVIDUALS DETERMINED TO BE AT HIGH RISK FOR GLAUCOMA

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

4 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Glaucoma Screening Act”;

5 SECTION 2. *Grant Program to Provide Screenings for Glaucoma to High Risk*
6 *Individuals.* –

7 (a) Grant Program. – The Secretary of Health (here called the “Secretary”) shall establish
8 a program to award a grant to an eligible entity to provide screenings for glaucoma for
9 individuals determined to be at high risk for glaucoma.

10 For purposes of this Act, “individuals determined to be at high risk for glaucoma” means
11 those individuals determined by the Secretary to be at high risk for glaucoma without regard to
12 the age of the individual.

13 (b) Eligibility. – In order to be eligible to receive a grant, an entity shall (1) submit an
14 application at such time, in such form, and with such information and assurances as the Secretary
15 may require; and (2) be dedicated solely to screening individuals for glaucoma and other eye
16 diseases.

17 (c) Use of Funds. – An entity receiving a grant shall use the grant in accordance with the
18 following requirements:

19 (1) The entity shall utilize mobile screening units to test for glaucoma and
20 other eye diseases.

21 (2) The entity shall target screening activities to populations primarily
22 consisting of individuals determined to be at high risk for glaucoma.

1 (3) The entity shall form partnerships with government health centers to
2 increase awareness of the need for screenings for glaucoma and to provide
3 screenings for glaucoma for individuals determined to be at high risk for
4 glaucoma, individuals with a family history of glaucoma, and individuals
5 with diabetes.

6 (4) The entity shall provide grants to approved medical residency training
7 programs to permit students participating in the programs to conduct
8 screenings for glaucoma for individuals determined to be at high risk for
9 glaucoma.

10 SECTION 3. *Authorization of Appropriations.* – There is authorized to be appropriated
11 Ten Million Pesos (P10,000,000.00) for grants under this Act for each of the first five (5) fiscal
12 years beginning after the date of the effectivity of this Act.

13 SECTION 4. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act shall be declared
14 unconstitutional, any other provision not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

15 SECTION 5. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations, or
16 parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

17 SECTION 6. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication
18 in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,