

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC
OF THE PHILIPPINES
First Regular Session



Senate
Office of the Secretary

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SENATE
S. No. 240

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Introduced by Senator Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid

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, or following moving objects or any other activity where clear and sharp vision is required. Although AMD causes pain to the patient, it will eventually result in loss of vision among the elderly if left untreated.

The factors affecting AMD include smoking, obesity, diet and pollution but the greatest amongst them is age. Although AMD may occur during middle age, studies show that people over 60 years of age are clearly at greater risk than other age groups. This has led to the popular belief that with ageing come loss of vision and blindness as a consequence of time is inevitable. In this regard, 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 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:*

1 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** - This Act shall be known as the "*Comprehensive Age-*
2 *Related Macular Degeneration Prevention and Mitigation Act of 2013*"

3
4 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** - It is the policy of the State to protect and
5 promote the right to health of the people.

6
7 Towards this end, the State commits itself to the establishment of institutional
8 and social mechanisms to support persons with Age-related Macular Degeneration. It
9 shall institutionalize a comprehensive national program to mitigate and combat Age-
10 related Macular Degeneration for purposes of empowering and providing its citizens an
11 optimal quality of life.

12
13 **SEC. 3. Annual Survey Programs.** - The National Institute of Health (NIH) of
14 the Department of Health (DOH) is hereby mandated to conduct an annual survey
15 program to determine the extent and total incidence and prevalence of persons with

1 Age-related Macular Degeneration in order to provide necessary health interventions to
2 address the needs faced by persons with Age-related Macular Degeneration.

3
4 The NIH shall carry out a program to expand and intensify research to develop
5 innovative advanced technologies for Age-related Macular Degeneration detection,
6 diagnosis, and treatment comparable to state-of-the-art technologies of more advanced
7 countries.

8
9 **SEC. 4. National Program for Age-related Macular Degeneration Awareness,**
10 **Education, Prevention, and Rehabilitation.** - The DOH is hereby mandated to
11 implement a comprehensive and nationwide program on Age-related Macular
12 Degeneration awareness, education, prevention, and rehabilitation.

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

15 a) to promote public awareness, education, and information on issues
16 concerning the medical condition;

17 b) to establish sustainable networks of support group for families of persons
18 inflicted with the medical condition;

19 c) to provide referral services to patients

20 d) to identify appropriate educational and medical expertise and facilities
21 suited to the needs of the patients;

22 e) to combat the spectrum of disorders related to the condition through
23 education, early intervention, and prompt referrals for treatments and services;

24 f) to undertake research and/or collaborate with other entities on research
25 activities regarding Age-related Macular Degeneration;

26 g) to receive donations and grants from local and international donor
27 institutions, foundations, and multilateral and bilateral foreign donor agencies involved
28 in the prevention, cure, and rehabilitation of persons with Age-related Macular
29 Degeneration;

30 h) to provide the avenue for exchange of information, exchange programs,
31 and sharing of best practices on issues relating to the early detection, prevention, cure,
32 treatment, and rehabilitation of persons with Age-related Macular Degeneration; and

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

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

4
5 The national campaign shall include the development and distribution of written
6 educational materials, and the development and placing of public service
7 announcements that are intended to encourage the elderly to seek comprehensive eye
8 examination and to create awareness on the need for improved technologies for Age-
9 related Macular Degeneration detection and minimally invasive treatment.

10
11 In developing the national campaign under this Act, the DOH shall recognize
12 and address racial, cultural, and ethnic disparities in the incidence of Age-related
13 Macular Degeneration.

14
15 **SEC. 5. *Programs and Services for Age-Related Macular Degeneration***
16 ***Prevention.*** - The programs and services that will be provided by the DOH shall
17 include, among others, the following:

18 a) Establishment of National and Regional Referral Services where the DOH
19 will update a list of health care institutions concerned with the care and rehabilitation of
20 patients with Age-related Macular Degeneration;

21 b) Publication of reading materials for the medical condition's early
22 detection, prevention, rehabilitation, and care;

23 c) The conduct of continuing education, information and training programs,
24 and lectures on the proper handling of afflicted persons;

25 d) The establishment of a databank and information and monitoring system
26 (IMS) on the demographic and socio-economic incidence and prevalence of afflicted
27 persons in the country; and

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

31
32 **SEC. 6. *Age-Related Macular Degeneration Detection and Screening Fees.*** -
33 The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PHIC) shall include the cost of early
34 detection and comprehensive eye examination for Age-Related Macular Degeneration
35 as one of the available benefits to its members.

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

6
7 **SEC. 7. National Awareness Week for Age-Related Macular Degeneration**
8 **Prevention and Mitigation.** – In order to mainstream the issues and concerns of the
9 elderly with Age-related Macular Degeneration, the first week of September of every
10 year is hereby declared as the “*Age-related Macular Degeneration Awareness Week.*”
11 This week shall be celebrated nationwide so that stakeholders can not only celebrate the
12 program’s progress but also increase public awareness on the prevalence and incidence
13 of Age-related Macular Degeneration in the country. The week-long activity will be
14 spearheaded by the Department of Health (DOH).

15
16 **SEC. 8. Appropriation.** – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this
17 Act shall be included and incorporated in the annual general appropriations of the
18 DOH and the NIH.

19
20 **SEC. 9. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).** – Within six (6) months
21 from the date of effectivity of this Act, the DOH shall promulgate the necessary
22 implementing rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

23
24 **SEC. 10. Separability Clause.** – If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or
25 unconstitutional, other provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified
26 accordingly.

27
28 **SEC. 11. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders,
29 rules or regulations, or parts thereof not consistent with the provisions of this Act are
30 hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

31
32 **SEC. 12. Effectivity Clause.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
33 publication in the Official Gazette or at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,