



Senate  
Office of the Secretary

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

13 JUL -8 P5:23

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**SENATE**

SENATE BILL NO. 656

INTRODUCED BY **SENATOR JOSEPH VICTOR G. EJERCITO**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Article II, Section 15 of the 1987 Constitution succinctly provides that "the State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them." Consonant with this Constitutional provision, it is also stipulated under Article XIII, Section 11, mandating the State to take certain steps to prioritize the needs of the underprivileged sick, elderly, disabled, women, and children and that the State shall endeavor to provide free medical care to paupers.

This proposed measure aims to establish a free medicine assistance program in a health district to benefit only the underprivileged, the elderly, the disabled, women and children, and the poorest of the poor, which shall be administered by the Department of Health in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

It is common knowledge that some of our countrymen die not because their illness is incurable but due to lack of medicine or proper medical treatment or assistance on account of poverty. The Government cannot always remain indifferent to this reality; it must offer some direct help somehow for their intended beneficiaries to feel its impact. In this context, the bill seeks to answer, starting with this approach, the problem of lack of medicine the cost of which is now beyond the reach of many Filipinos on account of poverty.

In view of the foregoing, the approval of this measure is fervently sought.

**JOSEPH VICTOR G. EJERCITO**



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**AN ACT ESTABLISHING A FREE MEDICINE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR THE POOR AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

**SECTION 1. Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “**Free Medicine for the Poor Act of 2013**”.

**SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy.** – It is hereby the policy of the State to promote the right to health and well-being of the people and to adopt a system of effecting the delivery of free medicine to those who have less in life, giving priority to the underprivileged, the sick, the elderly, the disabled, women and children, and the poorest of the poor.

**SECTION 3. Establishment of Free Medicine Assistance Program.** There is hereby established a Free Medicine Assistance Program, hereinafter referred to as the “Program”, to be administered by the Department of Health (DOH) through its authorized government hospital in each particular Congressional district, to be known as the health district, in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

**SECTION 4. Eligible Beneficiaries.** – The program shall be limited to eligible beneficiaries to be identified by the DOH through the government hospital in the health district in coordination with the DSWD. The implementing rules and regulations shall see to it that the intended beneficiaries come from the ranks of the poorest of the poor, the Program being strictly a poverty alleviation measure.

**SECTION 5. Appropriations.** – There is hereby appropriated the sum of Twenty Five Million Pesos (P25,000,000) for each health district to fund the initial requirements of this Act. The National Government shall subsequently include in the budget of the Department of Health in the General Appropriations Act such amount as may be necessary to carry out the objectives of this Act.

**SECTION 6. Rules and Regulations.** – The DOH, jointly with the DSWD, shall prescribe such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provision of this Act within six (6) months from the effectivity thereof.

**SECTION 7. Repealing Clause.** – All provisions of laws, orders, decrees, including rules and regulations inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed and/or modified accordingly.

**SECTION 8. Separability Clause.** – If any part or provision of this Act shall be held to be unconstitutional or invalid, other provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

**SECTION 9. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following this publication in one (1) national newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,