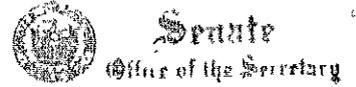


SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC )  
OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
First Regular Session )



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SENATE  
S.B. No. 1079

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Introduced By Senator Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid

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#### EXPLANATORY NOTE

More than 5 million people around the world struggle with systemic lupus erythematosus ("SLE"), a disease more popularly referred to as "lupus". Lupus is a potentially fatal autoimmune disease capable of damaging virtually any organ of the body. It is one of several diseases known as "the great imitators" because its symptoms often mimic or are mistaken for other illnesses. There is no known cure for lupus and treatment is restricted to dealing with symptoms, such as through the prevention of flares or the reduction of their severity and duration.

Many people with lupus are unable to maintain employment or attend school because of extended health-related absences and hospitalizations. For some, memory and mental processing may be impaired, rendering simple tasks such as recalling names or balancing a checkbook as significant challenges. Despite its enormous public health implications, lupus remains an under-recognized and under-appreciated health issue.

The proposed measure seeks to increase public awareness of lupus and to strengthen research on and treatment of the disease. Increased awareness and sensitivity to the disease will promote early identification and intervention, both of which are critical to minimize symptoms.

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

MANUEL "LITO" M. LAPID  
Senator

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Senate  
Office of the Secretary

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AN ACT  
INSTITUTING A NATIONAL HEALTH PROGRAM TO COMBAT SYSTEMIC  
LUPUS ERYTHEMATOSUS (LUPUS) DISEASE  
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

**SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** - This Act shall be known as the "**Comprehensive Lupus Prevention Act of 2013.**"

**SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** - It is the policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people. As such, the State shall promote awareness of and health programs focusing on Systemic Lupus Erythematosus ("Lupus") in order to empower citizens suffering therefrom to become, to the best of their potential, independent, self-reliant, and productive members of society.

**SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.*** - For the purpose of this Act, "Systemic Lupus Erythematosus" or "Lupus" shall be construed to mean a chronic autoimmune disease where the immune system attacks the body's cells and tissue, resulting in inflammation and tissue damage in different parts of the body, but most often affecting the heart, joints, skin, lungs, blood vessels, liver, kidneys, and nervous system, as diagnosed by a competent medical practitioner.

**SEC. 4. *National Survey and Research.*** - The National Institute of Health (NIH) of the Department of Health (DOH) shall conduct an annual survey to determine the

**SEC. 5. *Integrated Approach to Research in Cooperation with Concerned Research Agencies.*** - Within six (6) months from the date of effectivity of this Act, the DOH shall ensure that there is no conflict of interest between the NIH's research agenda and that of pharmaceutical corporations or other government agencies addressing the issue of lupus.

**SEC. 6. *National Program for Lupus Prevention and Treatment.*** - The DOH shall implement a comprehensive and nationwide program on lupus prevention and treatment with the following objectives:

- a) to promote and provide mechanisms for early identification, screening, and diagnosis of persons suffering from lupus;
- b) to promote public awareness, education, and information on issues concerning lupus;
- c) to establish sustainable support networks for families of persons diagnosed with lupus;
- d) to provide referral services to patients for appropriate educational and medical expertise and to identify appropriate educational or medical facilities suited to the needs of patients;
- e) to undertake research and collaborate with other institutions for the conduct of research activities pertaining to the disease;
- f) to promote an advocacy discouraging bias against and stereo-typing of afflicted persons;
- g) to provide an avenue for the sharing of best practices on issues relating to early detection, prevention, cure, treatment, and rehabilitation of persons diagnosed with lupus; and
- h) to network with other organizations, institutions, and professionals working on public programs for persons diagnosed with lupus.

**SEC. 7. *Programs and Services for Lupus Prevention.***- The programs and services that will be provided by the DOH shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- a) Orientation and Counseling Services for families of newly diagnosed persons;

c) Establishment of National and Regional Referral Services where the DOH shall maintain an updated list of health care institutions and practitioners concerned with the treatment of lupus;

d) Publication of a newsletter on current developments and research on lupus, as well as other reading materials on the early detection, prevention, and treatment of lupus, and best practices for the care of diagnosed persons;

e) The conduct of continuing education and training programs on the proper care of diagnosed persons; and

f) The establishment of a databank and an information and monitoring system (IMS) on country-specific statistics pertaining to lupus.

**SEC. 8. *Lupus Early Detection and Screening Fees.*** - The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PHIC) shall include the cost of early detection and screening programs for lupus as one of the available benefits to its members. The early detection and screening test fees shall be applied to, among others, testing cost, education, follow-up, and readable overhead expenses.

**SEC. 9. *Donations and Grants.*** - The DOH, NIH, and other departments of the DOH that may hereafter be tasked with the implementation of this Act, shall have the power to receive donations and grants from local and international donor institutions, foundations, and foreign donor agencies, provided that pertinent laws and rules on the receipt, accounting, and disbursement thereof shall be complied with.

**SEC. 10. *National Lupus Awareness Week.*** - In order to grow national interest and participation in the issues and concerns of lupus patients, the first week of May shall annually be celebrated as "Lupus Awareness Week." This week-long activity will be spearheaded by the DOH, in coordination with other concerned agencies, institutions, and stakeholders.

**SEC. 11. *Continuing Education and Training of Health Personnel and Service Providers on Lupus Prevention and Treatment.*** - All DOH staff and health providers providing health services to persons diagnosed with lupus shall undergo a mandatory continuing education and training program to ensure the delivery of up-to-date and relevant services.

**SEC. 12. *Protection Against Forcible Administration of Medical Treatment or Enrollment in Programs.*** - All persons administering treatment, counseling, or medication as well as all persons involved in the implementation of the DOH programs mandated in this Act shall respect the right of each patient to determine for himself or herself the medical treatment to be administered as well as the programs wherein he or she will participate, if any.

**SEC. 13. *Appropriation.*** - The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included and incorporated in the annual general appropriations of the DOH.

**SEC. 14. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** - Within six (6) months from the date of effectivity of this Act, the DOH shall promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

**SEC. 15. *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. 16. *Separability Clause.*** - If any provision or part of this Act is held unconstitutional or invalid, other provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

**SEC. 17. *Effectivity Clause.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

**Approved,**