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SENATE
S. No. 1997

RECEIVED BY: *J*

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article II, Section 14 provides:

Section 14. The State recognizes the role of women in nation-building, and shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of men and women.

Certain diseases, disorders, and conditions are peculiar to, or more serious, or more prevalent in women. For this reason, the factors of medical risk or type of medical intervention are different for them.

Unfortunately, the government fails to meet women's health needs. Perhaps due to its failure to understand that women have unique health conditions, the government could not provide health programs, specially designed for women.

To address this issue, this bill seeks to establish an office on women's health within the Department of Health in order to:

(1) Establish short-range and long-range goals and objectives and coordinate all activities within the Department of Health that relate to disease prevention, health promotion, service delivery, research, and public and health care professional education concerning women;

(2) Provide expert advice and consultation to the Secretary concerning scientific, legal, ethical, and policy issues relating to women's health; and

(3) Monitor the Department of Health offices, agencies, and regional activities regarding women's health and coordinate and stimulate activities of such departmental and agency offices on women's health.*

Miriam Defensor Santiago
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

ms

* This bill was originally filed during the Thirteenth Congress, First Regular Session

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1 AN ACT
2 ESTABLISHING AN OFFICE ON WOMEN'S HEALTH
3 WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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

4 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Women’s Health Office Act.”

5 SECTION 2. *Definition.* – As used in this Act, the term “women’s health conditions,”
6 with respect to women of all age, ethnic, and racial groups, means all diseases, disorders, and
7 conditions unique to, more serious, or more prevalent in women; and for which the factors of
8 medical risk or type of medical intervention are different for women, or for which it is unknown
9 whether such factors or types are different for women.

10 SECTION 3. *Office on Women’s Health.* – There shall be established within the
11 Department of Health an Office on Women’s Health, hereafter referred to as the “Office.” The
12 Office shall be headed by an Assistant Secretary in an *ex officio* capacity.

13 SECTION 4. *Duties.* – The Office shall, with respect to the health concerns of women –

14 (A) Establish short-range and long-range goals and objectives and coordinate all
15 activities within the Department of Health that relate to disease prevention, health promotion,
16 service delivery, research, and public and health care professional education concerning women;

17 (B) Provide expert advice and consultation to the Secretary of Health concerning
18 scientific, legal, ethical, and policy issues relating to women’s health;

1 (C) Monitor the Department of Health offices, agencies, and regional activities
2 regarding women's health and coordinate and stimulate activities on women's health;

3 (D) Establish a Department of Health Coordinating Committee on Women's Health to
4 be chaired by an Assistant Secretary for Women's Health which shall be composed of senior
5 level representatives from each of the agencies and offices of the Department of Health;

6 (E) Establish a National Women's Health Information Center to --

7 (1) Facilitate the exchange of information regarding matters relating to health
8 information and health promotion, preventive health services, research
9 advances and education in the appropriate use of health care;

10 (2) Facilitate access to such information;

11 (3) Assist in the analysis of issues and problems relating to the matters
12 described in this paragraph; and

13 (4) Provide technical assistance with respect to the exchange of information,
14 including facilitating the development of materials for such technical
15 assistance;

16 (F) Coordinate efforts to promote women's health programs and policies in the
17 private sector;

18 (G) Through publications and any other means appropriate, provide for the exchange
19 of information between members of the Office, grantees of the office, and the general public;

20 (H) Determine the current Agency level of activity regarding women's health, across
21 age, biological, and socio-cultural context, in all aspects of the Department's work, including
22 drafting technical practice guidelines, and conducting research into patient outcomes, delivery of
23 health care-services, and access to health care;

24 (I) Establish short-range and long-range goals and objectives for research important
25 to women's health and coordinate all other activities within the Department that relate to health
26 services and medical effectiveness research;

27 (J) Identify projects in women's health that should be conducted or supported by the
28 Department;

1 (K) Consult with health professionals, non-governmental organizations, consumer
2 organizations, women’s health professionals, and other individuals and groups, as appropriate,
3 on the Department’s policy with regard to women; and

4 (L) Identify the need for such research, and make an estimate each fiscal year of the
5 funds needed to adequately support the research.

6 SECTION 5. *Grants and Contracts Regarding Duties.* -- In carrying out the Office’s
7 duties, the Secretary, acting through the Office, may make grants to, and enter into cooperative
8 agreements, contracts, and interagency agreements with public and non-profit entities, agencies,
9 and organizations.

10 SECTION 6. *Evaluation and Dissemination.* -- The Office shall, directly or through
11 contracts with public and private entities, agencies, and organization, provide for evaluations of
12 projects carried out with financial assistance provided under the preceding section and for the
13 dissemination of information developed as a result of such projects.

14 SECTION 7. *Reports.* -- Not later than January 31 of each year, the Secretary shall
15 prepare and submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report describing the activities
16 carried out under this Act during the period for which the report is being prepared.

17 SECTION 8. *Separability Clause.* -- If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or
18 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid
19 and subsisting.

20 SECTION 9. *Repealing Clause.* -- Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive
21 order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule, or regulation contrary to or inconsistent
22 with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

1 SECTION 10. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
2 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,