

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




Senate
Office of the Secretary

'16 JUL 20 P5:13

SENATE

Senate Bill No. 718

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by **SENATOR CYNTHIA A. VILLAR**

AN ACT
STRENGTHENING THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TOWARDS THE
TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION OF DRUG DEPENDENTS BY
ESTABLISHING DRUG REHABILITATION CENTERS IN EVERY PROVINCE
AND CITY IN THE COUNTRY, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

No less than the newly installed President of the Philippines, His Excellency Rodrigo R. Duterte, has acknowledged that one of the problems that bedevils our country today and which needs to be addressed with urgency is the proliferation of illegal drugs in all strata of Philippine society¹. True enough and in keeping with his campaign promise to eradicate the problem of illegal drugs², no minute is being wasted by his administration to relentlessly pursue all those involved in the illegal drug trade in the Philippines.

Changes are unfurling with President Duterte administration's intensified crackdown against illegal drugs; and we are witnessing one of the welcome changes—hundreds if not thousands of drug dependents, including a number of pushers, all over the country voluntarily surrendering to the authorities and promising to abandon their illegal activities³. While chiefly buoyed by a well-founded fear that they will be meted with the full force of the law if they do not surrender, their initiative undeniably presents an opportunity for them to be rehabilitated and start anew to live orderly and productive lives.

The government should take an active role to fully rehabilitate these drug dependents. After all, it is an avowed policy of the State, as enunciated in Republic Act 9165 or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, to provide effective mechanisms or measures to re-integrate into society individuals who have fallen victims to drug abuse or dangerous drug dependence through sustainable programs of treatment and rehabilitation.

¹ Inaugural Address of His Excellency Rodrigo R. Duterte dated 30 June 2016

² <http://cnnphilippines.com/news/2016/01/21/rodrigo-duterte-illegal-drugs-elections-2016.html>

³ <http://news.abs-cbn.com/news/07/14/16/60000-drug-users-pushers-have-surrendered-palace>,

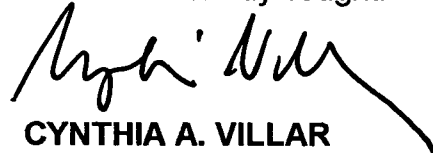
<http://pro8.pnp.gov.ph/2016/07/12/6869-drug-users-pushers-voluntarily-surrender-to-pnp-in-eastern-visayas/>,

<http://www.inquisitr.com/3292186/duterte-drug-war-about-4000-more-druggies-surrender-as-bodies-turn-up-across-philippines/>

As culled from the website of the Dangerous Drugs Board, there are a total of 44 Department of Health (DOH)-accredited rehabilitation centers nationwide, 28 of which are operated by non-government organizations, 12 are government-owned, and 4 are maintained by local government units.⁴ However, with the staggering increase of the number of drug dependents that have come out seeking rehabilitation, existing rehabilitation centers are obviously already incapable of accommodating them and yet we are expecting more to come out, voluntary or not, as the anti-illegal drugs drive is certainly to intensify in the succeeding months. Besides, rehabilitation centers may not be even accessible to the poor as the costs of treatment in most of these rehabilitation centers may not be affordable to all those seeking rehabilitation.

In view of the foregoing circumstances, the government must be ready to extend help to these drug dependents, who should be treated as victims rather than criminals. Ensuring their recovery through rehabilitation and reintegration into the community will be beneficial to society as they will become its productive members. Hence, this bill seeks to establish accessible rehabilitation centers in every province and city in the Philippines that will cater to the welfare of drug dependents in order to sustain the government's efforts in achieving drug-free society.

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



CYNTHIA A. VILLAR

⁴ <http://www.ddb.gov.ph/component/content/article/46-sidebar/65-doh-accredited-rehabilitation-centers#ncr>

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OTHER PURPOSES

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

1 SECTION 1. *Creation.* – In order to complement the intensified drive to
2 eradicate dangerous and/or illegal drugs in the country, there shall be treatment and
3 rehabilitation centers (hereinafter referred to as centers) for drug dependents
4 established in every province and city in the Philippines. These centers shall be
5 supervised by the Department of Health.

6 Sec. 2. *Objectives and Functions.* – These centers so established shall have
7 the following objectives and functions:

8 (a) To provide care, treatment and accommodation to every person found
9 to be a drug dependent;

10 (b) To bring such drug dependent to a state where he is physically,
11 psychologically and socially capable to cope with problems common to his peer
12 group;

13 (c) To facilitate and encourage the dissemination and exchange of ideas
14 and information on the prevention, care, treatment and control of drug addiction;

15 (d) To provide after-care, follow-up and social reintegration services to
16 every drug dependent in order to assist in his assimilation to his family and
17 community after his release from the center;

18 (e) To provide motivation to each drug dependent in order that he could
19 regain self-confidence, rediscover his working abilities and develop a sense of
20 responsibility for himself;

1 (f) To encourage the formation of organization and associations
2 composed of parents, guardians and immediate relatives of drug dependents in
3 order to arouse their awareness and enhance their participation in the care,
4 treatment and rehabilitation of their relatives or wards found to be drug dependent
5 patients;

6 (g) To undertake continuous training of physicians, nurses, health officers
7 and social workers on the practical and scientific methods of prevention, care,
8 treatment and rehabilitation of persons found to be drug dependents; and

9 (h) To strengthen the emotional and spiritual make-up of every drug
10 dependent by conducting regular guidance and counseling sessions as well as
11 interdenominational services.

12 *Sec. 3. Sites of the Centers.* – The Secretary of Health and the local chief
13 executives shall determine the location of the centers in their respective provinces
14 and cities in the country.

15 In the determination and prioritization of the sites where centers will be
16 established, consideration shall be given to the following:

- 17 a.) Existence (or the lack) of national and local government-operated or
18 -accredited rehabilitation centers;
- 19 b.) Density of the population and rate of incidence of drug dependence;
20 and
- 21 c.) Locations that will provide peaceful and quiet environments in order to
22 ensure a focused and uninterrupted treatment and rehabilitation of the
23 drug dependents but at the same time reasonably accessible to the
24 prospective clientele;

25 Pending the establishment of centers in some provinces, the Secretary of
26 Health should initiate drug rehabilitation programs in existing government hospitals in
27 the province.

28 *Sec. 5. Affordability of Rehabilitation and Treatment.* –

29 The Secretary of Health shall establish a socialized scheme for the payment
30 of the expenses of rehabilitation and treatment of drug dependents with the end in
31 view that it is the government's duty to ensure that drug dependents are rehabilitated
32 and reintegrated into society; Provided, that drug dependents who are indigents and
33 whose immediate next of kin are likewise indigent shall not be required to pay;
34 Provided further, that expenses of rehabilitation and treatment may be chargeable to
35 Philhealth by drug dependents who are likewise its members in good standing; and
36 Provided finally, that drug dependents shall not be required to pay a deposit as a

1 condition for their admittance to any government-operated center or government
2 hospitals.

3 **Sec. 6. *Director of the Center.*** – Each of the Centers shall be headed by a
4 Director, who shall be appointed by the Secretary of Health and vested with powers
5 generally exercised by a chief of a government hospital.

6 The appointment of the directors of the centers should follow a reliable and
7 stringent selection process, to be adopted by the Department of Health. In no case
8 shall a person be appointed as Director of a Center unless he or she possesses the
9 following qualifications, among others: shall be of good moral character; shall be of
10 sound mind; shall not have been convicted by a court of competent jurisdiction of
11 any offense involving moral turpitude; shall be a holder of the degree of Doctor of
12 Medicine or its equivalent conferred by a college of medicine duly recognized by the
13 government; and shall have at least five (5) years experience in the care, treatment
14 and rehabilitation of drug dependents.

15 **Sec. 7. *Personnel and Staff.*** – The Secretary of Health, in consultation with
16 the Director of the respective centers, shall appoint such other personnel and staff as
17 may be necessary for the effective operation of the Center, subject to existing laws,
18 rules, and regulations.

19 In line with the local government units' role of assisting in the rehabilitation or
20 treatment of drug dependents provided under Section 51 of Republic Act 9165 or the
21 Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, as amended, local government units
22 may detail personnel, as may be necessary, to perform tasks and functions that are
23 supportive to the complete and effective rehabilitation of drug dependents being
24 treated in the centers.

25 It is mandatory that the officials, personnel and staff to be employed and/or
26 detailed at the centers will undergo integrity tests and trainings, from time to time, as
27 measure to prevent infiltration by drug syndicates into our drug rehabilitation centers
28 and system.

29 **Sec. 8. *Government Assistance to the Center.*** – The Secretary of Health is
30 hereby authorized to call upon any department, bureau, agency or instrumentality of
31 the government for such assistance as may be necessary for the effective
32 implementation of this Act.

33 **Sec. 9. *Rules and Regulations.*** – The Secretary of the Department of Health,
34 in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the
35 Department of Interior and Local Government, the Philippine National Police, the
36 Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, concerned non-governmental organizations,
37 and other stakeholders, shall promulgate such rules and regulations as may be
38 necessary to secure an effective administration of the centers and the effective
39 implementation of the provisions of this Act, within sixty (60) days from the approval
40 of this Act.

1 Sec. 10. *Appropriations.* – The sum necessary for the effective
2 implementation of this Act shall be charged against the appropriations for the
3 Department of Health under the General Appropriations Act.

4 Thereafter, such amount as may be necessary for the continued operation of
5 the centers shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

6 Sec. 11. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
7 publication in the Official Gazette or in any two newspapers of general circulation.

8 Approved,