

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

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SENATE

S.B. No. 972

BY: 

Introduced by Senator **SONNY ANGARA**

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

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Poor Filipinos still face the problem of limited access to essential medicines. As observed by the World Health Organization (WHO), the major causes of deaths in low-income countries can be treated effectively with simple essential medicines. The government must offer direct assistance to beneficiaries that do not have access to proper health care.

According to a 2009 WHO survey, medicines in the Philippines are more expensive compared to other Asian countries. There is still insufficient access to low cost, safe, and quality essential medicines among low-income families. This bill seeks to answer the problem of not being able to access affordable medicine.

Section 15, Article II of the Constitution mandates that the State shall protect and promote the right of the people to health. The government must have a comprehensive and integrated approach to health development with the end view of making essential health services available to all the people at affordable cost, giving priority to the needs of the underprivileged Filipinos.

Therefore, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



SONNY ANGARA

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**AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A FREE MEDICINE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
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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 **“Free Medicine for the Poor Act.”**
2
- 3 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and
4 promote the right to health and well-being of every Filipino and to adopt a system of
5 implementing the delivery of free basic medicines to those who have less in life in all health
6 facilities in the country, giving priority to the underprivileged, ailing, malnourished, elderly,
7 women, children, disabled, and the poorest of the poor.
8
- 9 **SEC. 3. Objectives.** This Act pursues the following objectives:
10 a) To promote optimal health and well-being of every Filipino by improved access to
11 medicines; and
12 b) To address the health needs of the marginalized sectors such as the poor,
13 malnourished, elderly, women, children and the disabled through the establishment of a
14 Free Basic Medicine Assistance Program in all government health facilities nationwide.
15
- 16 **SEC. 4. Establishment of Free Medicine Assistance Program.** There shall be established a
17 Free Medicine Assistance Program, hereinafter referred to as the “Libreng Gamot Program”, to
18 be administered by the Department of Health (DOH) through government district hospitals, local
19 health units and barangay health centers in all cities and municipalities, in coordination with the
20 Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).
21
- 22 **SEC. 5. Eligible Beneficiaries.** The Libreng Gamot Program shall be restricted to qualified
23 poor recipients as certified by the barangay and the DSWD officials.
24
- 25 **SEC. 6. Availment of Free Medicines.** Free medicines shall be made available in all
26 government district hospitals, local health units and barangay health centers. These health
27 facilities shall account for all the medicines released to qualified beneficiaries through the

1 submission of quarterly reports to the DOH.

2

3 **SEC. 7. Appropriations.** The amount needed for the initial implementation of this Act shall be
4 charged against the appropriations of the DOH. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for
5 the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations
6 Act.

7

8 **SEC. 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** The DOH, in coordination with the DSWD and
9 in consultation with the Philippine Medical Association (PMA), shall promulgate the necessary
10 rules and regulations to effectively implement the provisions of this Act within six (6) months
11 from the effectivity hereof.

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13 **SEC. 9. Separability Clause.** If any part or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or
14 invalid, other parts or provisions hereof which are not affected shall continue to be in full force
15 and effect.

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17 **SEC. 10. Repealing Clause.** All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations and
18 other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed
19 or modified accordingly.

20

21 **SEC.11. Effectivity.** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official
22 Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

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24 Approved,