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SENATE
P.S. Res. No. 998

Introduced by **Senator Raffy T. Tulfo**

A RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND DEMOGRAPHY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED NEED TO ADDRESS THE LACK OF ANTI-VENOM SUPPLIES AND TRAINED PERSONNEL ACROSS ALL REGIONAL HOSPITALS IN THE PHILIPPINES

1 WHEREAS, Article 2, Section 15 of the Constitution provides that "The State shall
2 protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness
3 among them";

4 WHEREAS, GMA Network reported in its 13 February 2024 online publication that
5 a 3-year old girl in Northern Samar who was bitten by a cobra in their comfort room died
6 on the way to a folk healer;

7 WHEREAS, Philippine Star's 31 January 2024 online news article reported that
8 Maximo Millan, 64, a farmer in Barangay Babayongan, Dalaguete, Cebu was found lying
9 on a grassy area with a bite mark similar to that of a snake at the back of his left knee
10 after pasturing his goat, he was brought to a hospital but did not make it alive;

11 WHEREAS, according to GMA News Online in an article published on 25 January
12 2024, a 27-year old man in Paniqui, Tarlac was urinating outside his home when he was
13 bitten on the foot by a cobra. He was taken to the hospital but was then declared dead
14 on arrival;

15 WHEREAS, Philippine News Agency reported that in 2018, Jason Tasan, a 12-year
16 old boy in Leyte accompanied his mother in harvesting rice grains when a snake suddenly
17 attacked and bit him in the chest. He was rushed to a hospital, 30 kilometers away from

1 the rice field, where he was immediately injected with anti-venom but passed away after
2 a few minutes. He was the youngest out of nine siblings and the second to die following
3 a snake bite on the area;

4 WHEREAS, another article from the Philippine News Agency accounts for the death
5 of Erwin Vicente, a 34-year old farmer who died from cobra bite in Barangay Santa Maria,
6 Nueva Ecija on 22 July 2018;

7 WHEREAS, the World Health Organization (WHO) recognized snakebite
8 envenoming as the highest priority since 2017 and acknowledged it as a neglected tropical
9 disease that was estimated to affect 5.4 million victims with up to 138,000 deaths around
10 the world;

11 WHEREAS, in tropical countries, snake bites by the Philippine Cobra is a common
12 cause of death among rice farmers. The death rate from cobra bites was estimated to be
13 as high as 107.1 deaths per 100,000 people annually at a given location, according to
14 study conducted by the US Naval Medical study Unit, where only only 8% of the research
15 victims made it to a hospital;

16 WHEREAS, according to a study conducted by PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases
17 2022, the estimated incidence of snakebite in the Philippines ranged from 11,452 to
18 15,772 with an annual average of 13,377 victims, of which, 1,755 are treated with anti-
19 venom and 550 die in vain;


20 WHEREAS, there are several reports of the recent increase of snake sightings in
21 the country particularly of king cobras in Cebu which is attributed to their mating season
22 within the timeframe between January to April;

23 WHEREAS, the Cebu City Health Department (CHD) admitted to the unavailability
24 of antivenom which is not included in their 2024 annual budget and in their inability to
25 administer it citing the absence of trained personnels, in a letter to the Cebu City Council
26 dated 30 January 2024;

27 WHEREAS, given that the country is mostly composed of agricultural and rural
28 areas, it is a must that there be strategically located anti-venom centers throughout the
29 country where anti-venom banks will be maintained and corresponding trained medical
30 personnel be available to diagnose the bites and administer the necessary medication.

1 NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES, that
2 the Senate Committee on Health and Demography be directed to conduct an inquiry, in
3 aid of legislation on the reported need to address the lack of anti-venom supplies and
4 trained personnels across the various regions in the Philippines.

Adopted,



Raffy T. Tulfo