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SENATE

Senate Bill No. 710

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INTRODUCED BY SEN. JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The recent dengue outbreak, which has claimed scores of lives, should alert the government to critically come up with a program that shall search for a panacea not only to this disease, but also other diseases, with no known vaccines or cure.

While vaccines for other virus-based and bacteria-based diseases are readily available, courtesy of researches conducted by medical facilities abroad, it is unfortunate that no similar researches have so far been undertaken with respect to diseases which are peculiar in the region, if not in our country.

As in the case of small pox, which has almost been eradicated through the development of a vaccine, dengue and other local diseases could possibly be eliminated through some appropriate vaccines which can be developed, harnessed and utilized, if only concerned government agencies, and other private and public institutions shall put their acts together, pool their resources and conscientiously work towards finding for said cures.

The purpose of this measure is to establish a medical research facility to search for vaccines for dengue, malaria, yellow fever and other diseases. Through this facility, academic experts and scientists, and other individuals, both from the government and private institutions can work together to develop appropriate vaccines.

This may be a tall order, certainly. Yet, with enough funding, coupled with dedication of people who care, such a facility may be an answer to disease-related problems confronting our communities.

Hence, immediate enactment of this bill is earnestly sought.


JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA
Senator

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A MEDICAL RESEARCH FACILITY TO SEARCH FOR
VACCINES FOR DENGUE, MALARIA, YELLOW FEVER AND OTHER LOCAL
VIRUS OR BACTERIA-BASED DISEASES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. *Medical Research Facility* - There shall be established within the Department of Health, a Medical Research Facility to be headed by an administrator who shall be appointed by the Secretary on the basis of technical expertise, academic background and appropriate work experience. The Facility shall be tasked primarily to look for vaccines for dengue, malaria, yellow fever and other virus or bacteria-based diseases. Apropos such task, the facility shall also:

(a) establish and maintain a national registry of serious diseases and illnesses, both virus-based and bacteria-based;

(b) establish and maintain inventory of literature, research, and studies on these diseases;

(c) in cases of public health emergencies caused or believed to be caused by an epidemic or outbreak, provide medical care and testing to affected individuals, including but not limited to tissue sampling, chromosomal testing where appropriate, epidemiological studies, or any other assistance appropriate under the circumstances;

(d) conduct, and promote the coordination and acceleration of, research, investigations, experiments, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention, and control of these local diseases;

(e) encourage, cooperate with, and render technical services and provide Financial assistance to appropriate- public or private -agencies, institutions, and organizations, and individuals in the conduct of such activities;

(f) establish technical advisory committees composed of recognized experts to assist in the examination and evaluation of research progress and proposals and to avoid duplication of research, and

(g) conduct and promote coordination and acceleration of training for individuals relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, and control of diseases.

SEC. 2. Authorized Activities of Administrator in Establishing Research and Development Program - In carrying out the provisions of the preceding subsection the Administrator is authorized to:

(a) collect and make available, through publications and other appropriate means the results of and other information, including appropriate recommendations by him in connection therewith, pertaining to such research and other activities;

(b) cooperate with other departments and agencies, and other public and private agencies, institutions, and organizations and with any industries involved, in the preparation and conduct of such research and other activities;

(c) enter into contracts with academic experts and scientists, including those from non-profit organizations who shall be tasked primarily to pool together their resources in researching for vaccines for diseases, particularly local ones and those unique in Philippine setting;

(d) make grants to agencies to other public or nonprofit private agencies institutions and organizations, and to individuals for purposes stated in this Act;

(e) establish and maintain, research fellowships, in public or nonprofit private educational institutions or research organizations;

(f) collect and disseminate, in cooperation with other departments and agencies, and with other public or private agencies, institutions, and organizations having related responsibilities, basic data on disease prevention and control;

(g) develop effective and practical processes, methods, and prototype devices for prevention or control; and

(h) construct facilities, provide equipment, and employ staff as necessary to carry out this Act;

(i) shall conduct studies, including epidemiological, clinical, and laboratory and field studies, as necessary to identify and evaluate exposure to and effects of diseases on human health;

(j) may utilize, on a reimbursable basis, the facilities of existing government and private scientific laboratories and research centers, and

(k) shall consult with other agencies to ensure that similar research being conducted in other agencies is coordinated to avoid duplication.

In carrying out the provisions of this section, the Administrator shall provide training for, and make training grants to, personnel of appropriate and related agencies and other persons with suitable qualifications and make grants to such agencies, to other public or nonprofit private agencies, institutions, and organizations. Reasonable fees may be charged for such training provided to persons other than personnel of these related agencies but such training shall be provided to such personnel of such agencies without charge.

SEC. 3. Powers of the Facility. - The facility shall have the following powers:

(a) To appoint the officers and other personnel of the facility and fix their compensation, allowances and other emoluments, subject to the civil service and other existing applicable laws, rules and regulations;

(b) To suspend, dismiss, or otherwise discipline for cause, any employee, and/or to approve or disapprove the appointment, transfer or detail of employees, subject to the provisions of existing laws and regulations;.

(c) To enter into contracts;

(d) To acquire, use and control any land, building, facilities, equipment, instrument, tools and rights. required or otherwise necessary for the accomplishment of the objectives of the facility;

(e) To acquire, own, possess and dispose of any real or personal property;

(f) To accept donations, gifts, bequests, and grants;

(g) To ensure the implementation by various government departments and agencies of projects and activities as indicated in their respective annual budgets;

(h) To issue rules and regulations in pursuance of the provisions of this Act; and

(i) To perform any and all other acts incident to or required by virtue of its creation.

SEC. 4. The Secretariat- Duties and Responsibilities - The facility shall organize a secretariat. The staffing pattern and compensation schedule of the secretariat shall be drawn up in accordance with existing laws, rules and regulations. The Secretariat shall be responsible for:

(a) Ensuring an effective and efficient performance of the functions of the Commission and prompt implementation of the programs;

(b) Proposing specific allocation of resources for projects instated under approved programs;

(c) Submitting periodic reports to the bureau on the progress and accomplishment of programs and projects;

(d) Preparing an annual report on all activities of the bureau;

(e) Providing and performing general administrative and technical staff support; and

(f) Performing such other functions as the bureau may deem necessary.

SEC. 5. Appropriations - There shall be released an amount of Ten Million Pesos (Php10,000,000.00) .from existing savings of the Department of Health to be used for the establishment of the medical research facility.

Thereafter, whatever amount may be needed for funding shall be taken from the General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 6. Repealing Clause - All laws, decrees, issuances, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 7. Effectivity Clause - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.