

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



'22 AUG 31 A9 :38

SENATE

S. No. 1239

RECEIVED BY: _____

Introduced by **SENATOR CYNTHIA A. VILLAR**

**AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR A FREE ANNUAL MEDICAL CHECK-UP FOR FILIPINOS
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

“Prevention is better than cure” is an adage we oftentimes hear, which suggests that it is better to avoid something bad to begin with, rather than deal with its consequences later. In matters of healthcare, it is a reminder to be careful and engage in wellness and prudent practices to avoid getting ill rather than deal with it by treatment after it has already set-in.

To illustrate, as a preventive measure against Covid-19, we are frequently reminded to wear face masks, wash hands frequently, sanitize, practice social distancing, avoid close contact with infected persons, and essentially, to have ourselves vaccinated against the virus. Adopting these prudent practices is way better than being unmindful. If infected with Covid-19, one may experience symptoms, such as fever, colds and cough, tiredness, difficulty in breathing or shortness of breath, loss of sense of taste and smell, and other myriad of conditions that may be worrisome, pose difficulties to cure and may entail costly medical treatment. Moreover, a person infected with the coronavirus has to undergo the inconvenience of being quarantined or isolated, which disrupts one’s work, livelihood and quality time with family.

The same is true for other prevalent non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in the country, such as cardiovascular conditions (hypertension, stroke), cancers, diabetes mellitus, lung/chronic respiratory diseases, chronic kidney disease, among others. NCDs have become the major cause of disease burden in the Philippines. In 2019, NCDs accounted for about 70% of the 600,000 deaths nationwide, and this figure is projected to increase in the coming years. The treatment for NCDs is expensive as it requires periodic laboratory diagnostics and physician consults, maintenance medications, and expensive hospitalizations for complications.¹ The onset of NCDs, also called lifestyle are preventable, if one will be more cautious and engage in healthy lifestyle, such as making it a habit to exercise, eating a balanced healthy diet, avoiding tobacco and alcohol intake, and getting ample rest and sleep.

Apart from having a healthy lifestyle, it is also a form of preventive healthcare for people to have regular medical checkups, at least once every year. It is through medical checkups that doctors keep track of the overall health of a patient, detect diseases early on, increase the patient's chances of getting better treatment and cure, reduce healthcare cost, and boost lifespan and well-being. Annual physical examinations will help in keeping people more aware of the condition of their bodies, the risk factors involved, and what to do in order to prevent severe health issues.

The attached bill advocates for the application of preventive healthcare as it provides for Free Annual Medical Check-Up for Filipinos. This is in keeping with the constitutional policy that "the State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them."² This is also in accord with Republic Act No. 11223 or the Universal Health Care Law, which has for its purpose, among others, the adoption of a healthcare model that provides all Filipinos access to a comprehensive set of quality and cost-effective, promotive, preventive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative health services without causing financial

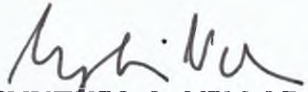
¹ Ulep, V., Uy, J, and Casas, L. December 2020. Primary Health Care for Noncommunicable Diseases in the Philippines. Philippine Institute for Development Studies.

<https://pidswebs.pids.gov.ph/CDN/PUBLICATIONS/pidsdps2039.pdf>

² The 1987 Philippine Constitution, Article II, Section 15.

hardship, and prioritizes the needs of the population who cannot afford such services.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly recommended.


CYNTHIA A. VILLAR



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

1 Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Free Annual Medical
2 Check-Up Act.”

3 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Principle.* – It is the policy of the State to support and
4 promote the right to health by enhancing programs which focus on preventive and
5 curative medicine that advance the health and well-being of Filipinos and prevent
6 disease, disability, and death. Pursuant thereto, Filipinos shall be entitled to an
7 annual medical check-up that is free of charge in any government hospital and
8 institution.

9 Sec. 3. *Coverage.* – All Filipino Citizens, by virtue of their membership in the
10 Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) mandated under Republic Act
11 No. 11223, or the “Universal Health Care Law”, shall be entitled to the applicable
12 benefits under the Philippine Health Insurance Program.

13 Members shall be entitled to a free annual medical check-up that shall include
14 blood sugar and cholesterol tests. Laboratory and diagnostic tests shall be
15 expanded, subject to the availability of PhilHealth funds.

1 Sec. 4. *Schedule of Free Medical Check-Up.* – To promote health, identify
2 risks, and ensure early diagnosis, PhilHealth shall establish a system that allows
3 access to a free annual medical check-up and ensure that Filipinos shall be accorded
4 the quality health care services that they deserve.

5 Sec. 5. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary to implement this Act shall be
6 charged against the PhilHealth funds.

7 Sec. 6. *Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).* – The Department of
8 Health shall, in coordination with PhilHealth, promulgate the necessary rules and
9 regulations for the proper implementation of this Act not later than ninety (90) days
10 from its effectivity.

11 Sec. 7. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part of this Act is declared
12 unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full
13 force and effect.

14 Sec. 8. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, executive orders, issuances, rules and
15 regulations, inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

16 Sec. 9. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
17 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation in the
18 Philippines.

Approved,