

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

THIRTEEN CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1675

Introduced by Rep. Nerissa Corazon Soon-Ruiz, M.D.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Health is just a letter away from wealth but as the country is saddled with economic and political problems, health care has always been relegated to the sidelines. This can easily be blamed on budgetary constraints hampering every program and plan of the government but this should not be an easy scapegoat for inefficiency.

Data from the Department of Health indicate that breast cancer is the third most common cancer worldwide and is the most common among women. In the Philippines, it ranks 2nd among the common cancers on both sexes and ranks first among Filipino women. Reports even have it that breast cancer is highest in the Philippines compared to other Southeast Asian countries. This is truly alarming!

The fact that breast cancer almost exclusively occurs in females does not imply that it is a concern exclusively for women. It is every one else's concern. After all, every man has a mother, a wife or a daughter. We should fight this menace with as much passion as we fight all other kinds of cancers.

As in all types of cancer, the cause of breast cancer is multi-factorial and the possibility of cure is high when detected early. Hence, public awareness and education is vital in the fight against breast cancer. Information is our primary weapon and it is on this that we must focus our efforts.

This bill seeks to establish breast care centers in every region nationwide to spearhead a sustained information campaign to raise the public's level of awareness on breast cancer, take the lead in providing affordable services in the fight and cure of the disease and coordinate with the Education Department to ensure that the ills, causes and symptoms of the disease are regularly discussed as a regular topic of an existing subject of the high school curriculum wherein female high school students are instructed to self-examine their breasts regularly for lumps and abnormalities believing that the habit could greatly help them especially when they reach the age of thirty when the possibility of contracting breast cancer is high.

NERISSA CORAZON SOON-RUIZ, M.D.

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AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BREAST CARE CENTERS IN EVERY REGION NATIONWIDE, APPRORIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. A breast care center, known in this Act as "Center," shall be established in every region of the country to spearhead the fight against breast cancer. It shall be a new department of existing regional hospitals of the National Government. Should there be no regional hospital in a region, the Center shall attached to any district hospital in the region which is most accessible to the highest number of constituents.

SECTION 2. The Centers shall be provided with such equipment, tools, implements, devices, apparatus and personnel as may be necessary for them to carry out multiple programs such as Breast Protection, Breast Surveillance, Breast Imaging, Breast Diagnostic and Surgery, Breast Cancer Chemotheraphy and Breast Cancer Awareness and Information.

SECTION 3. The Secretary of the Department of Health shall issue such guidelines, orders or rules and regulations as may be necessary for the establishment of a Center in every regional hospital of the national government or in a district hospital to be designated by the Secretary of Health for being the most accessible to the highest number of constituents in a region where there is no existing regional hospital; for the acquisition of the necessary equipment, tools, implements, devices and apparatus, the hiring of personnel and fix reasonable fees for the services of the Centers and to carry out the provisions and purposes of this Act.

SECTION 4. The Centers shall, in coordination with local government units, local health offices, the Philippine Information Agency and other government agencies, shall spearhead a sustained and extensive information and awareness campaign within their respective region to raise the level of awareness of the region's constituents especially the women sector on the ills, causes and symptoms of the disease for its early detection and prevention.

SECTION 5. The Centers shall coordinate with regional and local education officials to ensure that female high school students in both public and private schools are taught the pertinent information about the disease and are trained to habitually self-examine themselves as a part of the regular secondary curriculum.

SECTION 6. To fully implement the provisions of this Act, the Secretary of Health shall immediately include in the Department's program the operationalization of the Centers, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 7. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved.