

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

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2381



Introduced by HON. AMADO T. ESPINO, JR.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

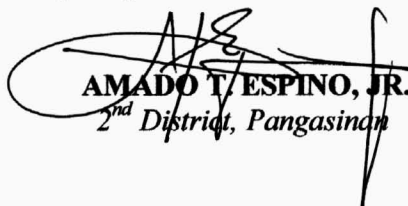
Free and immediate medical care is of utmost importance to our countrymen especially those in the rural areas. The rising costs of medicines and the fees being charged by those in the medical profession render the underprivileged helpless in seeking the necessary adequate services for their health needs.

Occasionally, there are medical missions being undertaken by civic-spirited groups to administer medical and dental assistance to people in the barrios or in the slum areas. While these activities richly deserve our commendations, the relief that they provide is but limited. We have yet to see a program that regularly and immediately responds to the basic medical needs of the poor.

This measure seeks to address that problem. It aims to provide free medicine assistance to people who are in need - - the poor, the underprivileged, the elderly and the disabled.

The measure is consistent with the constitutional mandate that "*the State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development with the end in view of making essential health services available to all the people at affordable cost, giving priority to the needs of the underprivileged, the sick, the elderly, the disabled, and the women and children.*"

In this light, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


AMADO T. ESPINO, JR.
2nd District, Pangasinan

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Introduced by HON. AMADO T. ESPINO, JR.

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

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

SECTION 1. *Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Free Medicine Assistance Act of 2004.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby the declared policy of the State to promote the right to health and well-being of the people and to adopt a system of effecting the delivery of free medicine to those who have less in life, giving priority to the underprivileged, the sick, the elderly, the disabled and the poorest of the poor.

SECTION 3. *Establishment of Free Medicine Assistance Program.* – There is hereby established a Free Medicine Assistance Program, hereinafter referred to as the “Program”, to be administered by the Department of Health through its authorized government hospital in each particular congressional district, to be known as the health district, in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

SECTION 4. *Eligible Beneficiaries.* – The Program shall be limited to eligible beneficiaries to be identified by the Department of Health through the government hospital in the health district in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development. The implementing rules and regulations shall see to it that the intended beneficiaries come from the ranks of the poorest of the poor, the Program being strictly a poverty alleviation measure.

SECTION 5. *Appropriations.* – There is hereby appropriated the sum of FIVE MILLION (P 5, 000,000.00) PESOS for each health district to fund the initial requirements of this Act. The National Government shall subsequently include in the budget of the Department of Health in the General Appropriations Act such amount as may be necessary to carry out the objectives of this Act.

SECTION 6. *Rules and Regulations.* – The Department of Health, jointly with the Department of Social Welfare and Development, shall prescribe such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provision of this Act within six (6) months from the effectivity hereof.

SECTION 7. *Repealing Clause.* – All provisions of laws, orders, decrees, including rules and regulations inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed and/or modified accordingly.

SECTION 8. *Separability Clause.* – If any part or provision of this Act shall be held to be unconstitutional or invalid, other provisions hereof which are affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 9. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publications in one (1) national newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,