

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

THIRTHEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 5273



Introduced by Rep. Alan Peter S. Cayetano

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill aims to designate the month of February of every year as ***“National Liver Cancer and Hepatitis-B Awareness Month.”*** This, in order to draw awareness and raise public attention on liver cancer and Hepatitis-B and the urgency to prevent and control the disease.

Hepatitis-B is a serious public health issue in the Philippines where it is highly endemic. The country office of the World Health Organization (WHO) reports that around 60 percent of Filipinos have been infected with HBV, while approximately 10 percent have chronic or active Hepatitis-B and are virus carriers. This means that there are already around 8 to 10 million Hepatitis-B carriers in our country who shall infect more people.

One of the major infectious diseases of humankind, Hepatitis-B is caused by the Hepatitis-B Virus, or HBV, which can be transmitted through blood, sex, shared needles and from an infected mother to her newborn during delivery. According to available data, there is a 90% chance for pregnant women who are HBV carriers to pass the virus on to their newborn at delivery. These children who become infected are more likely to become carriers and fatal complications may develop later in life.

Although most people are infected with Hepatitis-B in infancy or childhood, the illness manifests only in adulthood where most deaths occur, as a result of liver cancer and/or cirrhosis, both of which are strongly associated with the virus. It is shown that around 70% of liver cancer is caused by Hepatitis-B. Statistics further show that liver cancer is the 4th leading site of cancer for both sexes, ranking 2nd among males and 7th among females.

This bill hopes that a comprehensive public education and awareness program on Hepatitis-B and liver cancer will help enlighten people about the disease and stir them into action. A focal point of this program is an information campaign about the benefits of routine infant immunization within 24 hours of birth, a compulsory government health policy, to protect the youngest and most fragile of our population because they are the ones most at risk. The awareness program is vital in fighting this disease, which we are not helpless against if only our people have the right information and access to vaccination.

Immediate approval of this bill is thus most earnestly and urgently sought.

ATTY. ALAN PETER S. CAYETANO
Representative, Lone District of Taguig and Pateros

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**AN ACT DECLARING THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY OF EVERY YEAR AS "LIVER
CANCER AND HEPATITIS-B AWARENESS AND PREVENTION MONTH"**

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as "The Liver Cancer and Hepatitis-B Awareness and Prevention Month Act."

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – In furtherance of the mandate enshrined in the Philippine Constitution that "the State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them" (Article 2, Section 15) and "the State shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development" Article 13 and Article 14, the month of February of every year shall be known under the name of "Liver Cancer and Hepatitis-B Awareness and Prevention Month."

SEC. 3. Public Education and Awareness Program. – To ensure the meaningful observance of the month as herein declared. A comprehensive public education and awareness program shall be undertaken on the communicable disease of Hepatitis B. The program shall specifically discuss the causes, transmission, consequences, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention, and prevention of Hepatitis-B, including the urgent need for immediate infant immunization and the importance of observing the correct schedule and dosage, as well as the importance of child and adult vaccination, for a holistic approach to battling the virus.

SEC. 4. Inter-agency and Multi-Sectoral Effort. - The Department of Health on the part of the national government, and Cities and Municipalities on the part of local governments shall lead in the implementation of comprehensive public education and awareness program on Hepatitis-B and liver cancer through a collaborative inter-agency and multi-sectoral effort at all levels. It shall particularly ensure widespread and expeditious public information about the benefits of compulsory routine immunization for Hepatitis-B of all infants within 24 hours of Birth.

SEC. 5. Effectivity – This Act take effect shall effect fifteen (15) days after publication in at least two newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,