

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

House Bill No. 4463

Introduced by Hon. Mark Aeron H. Sambar

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article 2, Section 15 provides:

The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.

Depressive disorders (unipolar depression) are mental illnesses characterized by a profound and persistent feeling of sadness or despair and/or a loss of interest in things that once were pleasurable.* It is a disabling condition which adversely affects a person's sleeping and eating habits, family, work or school life, and general health. When a person has a depressive disorder, it interferes with daily life, normal functioning, and causes pain for both the person with the disorder and those who care about him or her. Depression is a common but serious illness that is both preventable and curable. Many people with a depressive illness never seek treatment. The vast majority, however, can get better with treatment.[†] In the United States, around 3.4% of people with major depression commit suicide, and up to 60% of people who commit suicide had depression or another mood disorder.[‡] One study

* <http://www.doh.gov.ph/faq/show/490.html>

† <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/depression/nimhdepression.pdf>

‡ Barlow DH. *Abnormal psychology: An integrative approach (5th ed.)*. Belmont, CA, USA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2005.

concluded that poverty increases the duration of episodes of common mental disorders⁵ which is significant for a developing country like the Philippines.

Doctors and scientists are now starting to look into the risk of depression in children. Research has shown that childhood depression often persists, recurs and continues into adulthood, especially if it goes untreated. The presence of childhood depression also tends to be a predictor of more severe illnesses in adulthood.^{**} A child with depression may pretend to be sick, refuse to go to school, cling to a parent, or worry that a parent may die. Older children may sulk, get into trouble at school, be negative and irritable, and feel misunderstood. Because these signs may be viewed as normal mood swings typical of children as they move through developmental stages, it may be difficult to accurately diagnose a young person with depression. Before puberty, boys and girls are equally likely to develop depressive disorders. By age 15, however, girls are twice as likely as boys to have experienced a major depressive episode.^{††}

Depression in adolescence comes at a time of great personal change—when boys and girls are forming an identity distinct from their parents, grappling with gender issues and emerging sexuality, and making decisions for the first time in their lives. Depression in adolescence frequently co-occurs with other disorders such as anxiety, disruptive behavior, eating disorders or substance abuse. It can also lead to increased risk for suicide.^{‡‡}

This bill seeks to find ways to help students cope with the detrimental effects of depression. By knowing the causes of this disorder and providing awareness and prevention programs, those suffering from depression can be reintegrated into mainstream society.


HON. MARK AERON H. SAMBAR
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⁵ Weich, Scott. *Poverty, Unemployment, and Common Mental Disorders, a Population Based Cohort Study*. <http://www.bmj.com/content/317/7151/115.full>.

^{**} Weissman MM, Wolk S, Goldstein RB, Moreau D, Adams P, Greenwald S, Klier CM, Ryan ND, Dahl RE, Wichramaratne P. Depressed adolescents grown up. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1999; 281(18): 1701-1713.

^{††} Cyranowski JM, Frank E, Young E, Shear MK. Adolescent onset of the gender difference in lifetime rates of major depression. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 2000; 57: 21-27.

^{‡‡} Shaffer D, Gould MS, Fisher P, Trautman P, Moreau D, Kleinman M, Flory M. Psychiatric diagnosis in child and adolescent suicide. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 1996; 53(4): 339-348.

1 teachers, school nurses, school social workers, coaches, school counselors, and
2 administrators) on effective depressive disorder prevention and assistance methods.

3 SECTION 4. *Public service announcements.* – The Secretary of Education, in
4 consultation with the Secretary of Health, shall carry out a program to develop, distribute,
5 and promote the broadcasting of public service announcements to improve public awareness,
6 and to promote the identification and prevention of depressive disorders.

7 SECTION 5. *Depressive disorder research and report.* – Not later than 18 months
8 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall conduct a study on
9 the impact depressive disorders have on educational advancement and achievement. The
10 study shall–

11 (a) determine the prevalence of depressive disorders among students and the
12 morbidity and mortality rates associated with depressive disorders;

13 (b) evaluate the extent to which students with depressive disorders are more likely to
14 miss school, have delayed rates of development, or have reduced cognitive skills;

15 (c) report on current national and local programs to educate the youth about the
16 dangers of depressive disorders, as well as evaluate the value of such programs; and

17 (d) make recommendations on measures that could be undertaken by the Congress,
18 the Secretary of Education, and the Secretary of Health, to strengthen depressive disorder
19 prevention and awareness programs.

20 SECTION 6. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision, or part hereof is held invalid or
21 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain
22 valid and subsisting.

23 SECTION 7. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive
24 order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent
25 with, the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

1 SECTION 8. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
2 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,