

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5037

Introduced by REP. ANTHONY G. DEL ROSARIO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to establish the National Stem Cell Research and Storage Center in the Philippines.

Stem cell research has been called the "*new frontier of medicine*" because of its potential to advance the understanding on the biological processes that keep our bodies healthy. Knowledge gained through stem cell research is expected to improve treatment for some of the incurable diseases such as heart disease, cancer, kidney diseases, Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis, lupus, sickle cell disease, HIV/AIDS, osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis and other degenerative diseases.

Several countries have already ventured into the stem cell treatment which is a type of regeneration medicine that introduces new cells into damaged tissue in order to treat a disease or injury. Through vigorous research on stem cell treatment which was developed from the findings of Canadian scientists Ernest A. McCulloch and James E. Till in the 1960s, thousands of patients around the globe have already benefited from using stem cell delivered safely by skilled and certified physicians.

With the increasing number of Filipinos suffering from terminal and extreme diseases, finding medical breakthrough for their cure should be prioritized. The establishment of a stem cell research and storage center is the first step towards addressing this concern. It restores the hope of Filipino patients who may have lost the chance to live a normal life again.

In view of the foregoing considerations, immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


ANTHONY G. DEL ROSARIO

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL STEM
CELL RESEARCH AND STORAGE CENTER AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. ***Declaration of Policy.*** – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to improve the quality of life for every Filipino by giving priority to research and development, invention, innovation, and their utilization; and to science and technology education, training, and services. Toward this end, the establishment of a stem cell research and storage center is necessary to utilize the potential of stem cells for curing many fatal diseases that afflict many Filipinos.

SEC. 2. ***Philippine National Stem Cell Research and Storage Center.*** – The Philippine National Stem Cell Research and Storage Center, hereinafter referred to as the Center, is hereby established under the Department of Health to provide research and develop techniques for the isolation, derivation, production, testing and storing of stem cells that are capable of producing almost all of the cell types of the developing body resulting in improved treatment for diseases and other adverse health conditions.

For purposes of this Act, “*stem cells*” refer to cells that have the potential to develop into some or many different types of cells in the body and serve as a repair system which theoretically divide without limit to replenish other cells for as long as the person is still alive.

SEC. 3. ***Objectives.*** – The Center shall have the following objectives:

- a) To establish mechanisms for the dissemination and utilization of research in stem cell;
- b) To ensure that the techniques in the research involving human cells is clearly consistent with the standards established under the applicable law;
- c) To promote science and technology research and development in the field of health;
- d) To ensure that the results of health research and development activities are utilized to improve the health of the people;
- e) To prioritize research in stem cell for clinical benefits.

SEC. 4. ***Duties and Functions.*** – The Center shall exercise the following duties and functions:

- a) Intensify research that may result in improved understanding of the stem cell treatments for diseases and other adverse health conditions;
- b) Conduct research on problems associated with degenerative processes, metabolic studies, prevention and rehabilitation of disabilities, health and social science, management of health systems, traditional and complimentary medicine, and health policies;
- c) Establish moral and ethical standards in stem cell research while maintaining the highest respect for human life and human dignity;
- d) Maximize resource generation of expert support staff;
- e) Establish local and foreign linkages on stem cell research; and
- f) Receive and manage grants, aid, donations or any kind of assistance for achieving its objectives.

SEC. 5. ***Executive Director.*** –The Center shall be headed by an Executive Director who shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines, from the list of scientists and specialist physicians recommended by the Secretary of Health.

SEC. 6. ***Qualification of the Executive Director.*** – The Executive Director shall be a recognized scientist in health research development or a specialist physician actively involved in health research program.

SEC. 7. ***Duties of the Executive Director.*** – The Executive Director shall be directly responsible for the Center, and shall have the following duties:

- a) Exercise over-all supervision and direction over the implementation of all research and development programs of the Center and in general to supervise and direct the management, operation and administration of the Center;
- b) Execute contracts, incur obligations, acquire and dispose of assets and deliver documents on behalf of the Center;
- c) Approve the Center's organizational structure, staffing patterns, operating and capital expenditures;
- d) Recommend the officers and employees of the Center on the basis of the highest possible standards of merit and fitness for public servants subject to the civil service laws, rules and regulations;
- e) Implement and enforce policies, decisions, orders, rules and regulations issued by the Department of Health; and
- f) Exercise such other powers and functions and perform such other duties as may be authorized, delegated, or assigned.

SEC. 8. ***Annual Report.*** – The Executive Director shall submit to the President of the Philippines, through the Secretary of Health, an annual report generally dealing with the activities and operations of the Center, together with the audit report on the relevant accounts.

SEC. 9. ***Appropriations.*** – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charged to the appropriations for the Department of Health. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for the operation and maintenance of the Center shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 10. ***Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Health shall, in coordination with the Executive Director of the National Institute of Health, issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 11. ***Separability Clause.*** – If any provision or part of this Act is

declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 12. ***Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations and other issuances, or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 13. ***Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,