



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

Sixteenth Congress
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 602

Introduced by Honorable Erlinda M. Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to establish a free medicine assistance program for the poor in consonance with the 1987 Constitution which provides that *“The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.”*

Social justice is caring for the poor, a continuing and sincere concern for the underprivileged, and a genuine and serious effort to improve their quality of life. Nowadays, there is a growing sentiment of the poor that they are being neglected by the government. Many of them die of sickness not because their cases are terminal but because they can hardly afford the medicines necessary to restore their health. We must, therefore, pursue the declared policy of the State to promote the right to health and well-being of the people and to adopt a system of affecting the delivery of free medicines to those who have less in life, giving priority to the underprivileged, the sick, the elderly, the disabled and the poorest of the poor.

The greatest wealth of a nation is its people. Thus, the government shall ensure that no sick person will be deprived of his right to medical attention including the supply of medicines despite his financial status. It is likewise mandated to reduce economic inequalities and provide medical care to paupers.

The “Free Medicines for the Poor Act” is an effective measure to counter the inaccessibility of medicines to our underprivileged and impoverished populace. It seeks to bridge the growing gap between health and poverty, by providing the poor medicines that would help them remain healthy.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


ERLINDA M. SANTIAGO



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

Be it 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 “*Free Medicine Assistance Act of 2013.*”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health and well-being of every Filipino and to adopt a system of implementing the delivery of free medicines to those who have less in life, giving priority to the underprivileged, the ailing, the malnourished, the elderly, the disabled and the poorest of the poor.

SEC. 3. *Objectives.* – In consonance with the foregoing policies, the State shall pursue the following objectives:

- a) Establish a Free Medicine Assistance Program for the poor;
- b) Maximize efforts to ensure that the needs of the poor for medicine are properly met; and
- c) Ensure that the free medicines provided in this Program are availed of only by qualified recipients who shall be limited to the underprivileged, the ailing, the malnourished, the elderly, and the disabled.

SEC. 4. *Establishment of Free Medicine Assistance Program.* – There is hereby established a Free Medicine Assistance Program, hereinafter referred to as the “*Libreng Gamot Program,*” to be administered by the Department of Health (DOH) through district hospitals and health centers in all

municipalities, in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

SEC. 5. *Eligible Beneficiaries.* – The *Libreng Gamot* Program shall be restricted to qualified recipients to be identified by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). The implementing rules and regulations shall guarantee that the intended beneficiaries come from the ranks of the poorest of the poor, the *Libreng Gamot* Program being strictly a poor-oriented measure. For purposes of this Act, the poorest of the poor refers to a household whose monthly income is less than Three Thousand Pesos (P3,000.00).

SEC. 6. *Availment of Free Medicines.* – The medicines shall be made available in district hospitals and local health units. All medicines which will be released to qualified recipients shall be accounted for through a quarterly report to be submitted to the Department of Health.

SEC. 7. *Appropriations.* – The amount of Five Hundred Million Pesos (P500,000,000.00) for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged to the appropriations of the Department of Health under the current General Appropriations Act. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the Annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 8. *Rules and Regulations.* – The Department of Health (DOH) in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), shall prescribe such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act within six (6) months from the effectivity hereof.

SEC. 9. *Separability Clause.* – If any part or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, other parts or provisions thereof which are not affected hereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SEC. 10. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations and other issuances or parts thereof, inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 11. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,