

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

16th Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1365



Introduced by **HON. MA. VICTORIA R. SY-ALVARADO**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Despite the pronouncements of the Department of Health and other agencies, it has been exposed in the media many times that the practice of detaining indigent or poor patients because of unpaid hospital bills has been continuing in some hospitals and medical clinics. Worse are the stories of dead patients not being released because of non-payment of bills, a situation that is doubly traumatic for the grieving family and relatives.

This bill allows the underprivileged patient to leave the hospital upon the execution of a duly secured promissory note and imposes a penalty sanction for the violation of its provisions.

While it is true that hospitals and medical clinics are first and foremost, business establishments whose primary concern is profit, it is but humane to respect also the rights of poor patients and their families and give some leeway to those who have difficulty in paying their hospital bills.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'V' followed by a horizontal line and a curved flourish at the end.

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AN ACT
PROHIBITING THE DETENTION OF LIVE OR DEAD PATIENTS IN HOSPITALS
AND MEDICAL CLINICS ON GROUNDS OF NONPAYMENT OF HOSPITAL
BILLS OR MEDICAL EXPENSE

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

SECTION 1. It shall be unlawful for any hospital or medical clinics in the country to detain or to otherwise cause, directly or indirectly, the detention of patients who have fully or partially recovered or have been adequately attended to or who may have died, for reasons of nonpayment in part or in full, of hospital bills or medical expenses.

SEC. 2. Patients who are fully or partially recovered and who wish to leave the hospital or medical clinic but are financially incapable to settle, in part or in full, their hospitalization expenses, including professional fees and medicines, shall be allowed to leave the hospital or medical clinic, with a right to demand the issuance of the corresponding medical certificate and other pertinent papers upon the execution of a promissory note covering the unpaid obligation. The promissory note shall be secured by either a mortgage or by a guarantee of a co-maker, acceptable to the hospital management, who will be jointly liable with the patient for the unpaid obligation. In the case of a deceased patient, the corresponding death certificate and other documents required for the interment and other purposes shall released to any surviving relatives executing the promissory note.

SEC. 3. Any officer or employee of the hospital or medical clinic responsible for the releasing patients who violates the provisions of this Act shall be punished by a fine of not less than Five Thousand (5,000) Pesos but more than Fifteen Thousand (15,000.00) Pesos or imprisonment of not less than (1) month but not more than six (6) months, or both.

SEC. 4. The Department of Health shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 5. This Act shall take effect Fifteen (15) days after its publication in two (2) national newspaper of general circulation.

Approved

