

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. 3461



Introduced by **BAYAN MUNA**
Reps. **NERI J. COLMENARES** and **CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE**

**AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 4(e) AND 10 OF REPUBLIC ACT 7432,
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE SENIOR CITIZENS ACT OF 1992,
AS AMENDED, GRANTING FREE HOSPITALIZATION TO INDIGENT
SENIOR CITIZENS IN ANY GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL.**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Senior Citizens Act of 1992, as amended by the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2003 and 2010, has rightfully granted to our senior citizens the privileges that they deserve after having worked hard and helped in building our nation during the prime of their lives.

However, there is a felt need to afford our senior citizens additional and better benefits than what are presently provided under our present laws, particularly during the times when their health starts to fail, yet they could no longer provide for themselves.

The proportion of the older population is rising worldwide. The same is happening in the Philippines where from 3.7 million or 5.4% of the population in 1995, the senior citizen population has increased to 7 million or 6.9% of the total population at present, and 1.3 million of which are indigents.

In a report published the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and HelpAge International entitled "Ageing in the 21st Century: A Celebration and a Challenge" projections for the population of senior citizens will increase and would account for as high as 15.3% in 2050. It has also been noted in the same report that access to healthcare and affordable medicines is a problem for the majority of the senior citizens in the country even with the existing legislation of the government.

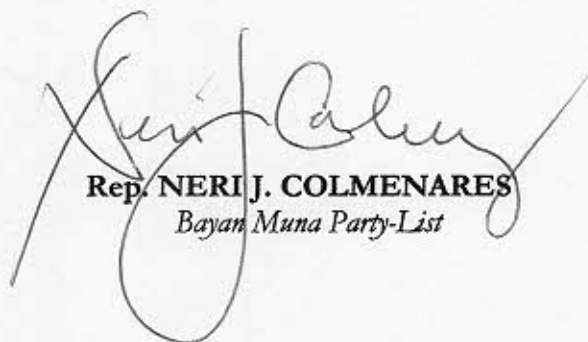
According to the Department of Health, increase in the demand for health services comes with the rise of the aging population. The agency cited a study which claimed that senior citizens are heavy consumers of personal or private health care, meaning a lot of them are forced to pay for their own health expenses. It cannot be denied that the senior citizens often avail medical services due to their health conditions brought about by their age and more often than not, the procedures that they avail comes with a high cost even in public hospitals.

Healthcare in the country may it be public or private always comes with a price. On average, a consultation with a doctor starts from 300 pesos. Some private hospitals require a deposit fee for confinement and this has been often the cause of patients being unable to be discharged from the hospital due to the inability to pay fees. Public hospitals on the other hand while they offer free confinement and treatment, some of them require the patients on the other hand to pay for medical supplies such as alcohol, bandages, among others. Though the cost of healthcare is discounted for senior citizens under the existing law, more than 50 percent of patients confined in hospitals use their income (48% in private hospitals, 51% for those confined in public hospitals) and/or savings (37% for those confined in private hospitals and 32% for those confined in public hospitals) to shoulder the costs of hospitalization according to the raw data from National Demographic and Health Survey by the NSO in 2008. In the case of indigent senior citizens, they cannot possibly shoulder even their privilege of having a discounted cost of hospitalization.

Based on government data analyzed by GlobalAge Watch of HelpAge International, an international advocacy organization for senior citizens, only 21% of the senior citizens receive pension. On the other hand, majority of the senior citizens still work for their subsistence or to augment those provided by their pension. This has manifested as the population of working senior citizens had rapidly increased from a relatively stagnant 5.6% in the 1990s to 6.8% in 2008. This, all the more, makes free hospitalization for indigent senior citizens necessary to support the Senior Citizens Act's objective to ensure that the country's senior population "attain a more meaningful and productive ageing" and fully participate in society.

In line with the core principles and objectives of the Expanded Senior Citizens Act, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

Approved,



Rep. NERI J. COLMENARES
Bayan Muna Party-List



Rep. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE
Bayan Muna Party-List

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. **3461**

Introduced by BAYAN MUNA
Reps. NERI J. COLMENARES and CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE

**AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 4(e) AND 10 OF REPUBLIC ACT 7432,
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE SENIOR CITIZENS ACT OF 1992, AS
AMENDED, GRANTING FREE HOSPITALIZATION TO INDIGENT
SENIOR CITIZENS IN ANY GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL.**

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

SECTION 1. – Section 4(e) and 10 of Republic Act No. 7432, as amended by Republic Act No. 9994, otherwise known as the "Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010", are hereby further amended to read as follows:

"Sec. 4. Privileges for the Senior Citizens. – The senior citizens shall be entitled the following:

"xxx

*(e) free medical and dental services, diagnostic and laboratory fees such as, but not limited to, x-rays, computerized tomography scans and blood tests, in all government [facilities] **HOSPITALS AND SIMILAR HEALTHCARE FACILITIES, and FREE HOSPITALIZATION AND CONFINEMENT FOR INDIGENT PATIENTS,** subject to the guidelines to be issued by the DOH in coordination with the PhilHealth";*

*Sec. 10. Appropriations. - The Necessary appropriations for the operation and maintenance of the OSCA shall be appropriated and approved by the LGUs concerned. For national government agencies, the requirements to implement the provisions of this Act shall be included in their respective budgets: Provided, That the funds to be used for the national health program, [and for the] vaccination of senior citizens, **AND FOR THE FREE HOSPITALIZATION***

AND CONFINEMENT FOR INDIGENT PATIENTS in the first year of the DOH and thereafter, as a line item under the under the DOH budget in the subsequent General Appropriations Act (GAA): Provided, further, That the monthly social pension for indigent senior citizens in the first year of implementation shall be added to the regular appropriations of the DSWD budget in the subsequent GAA.

SEC. 2. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,