

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **4455**



Introduced by Hon. Jerry P. Treñas

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It is an innate trait of all Filipinos to care for the elderly. We highly value and cherish our senior citizens, and our very own Constitution provides that "the family has the duty to care for its elderly members but the State may also do so through just programs of social security."¹ In fact, the Philhealth program was established to give life to the Constitutional edict for the State to adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development, giving priority to the needs of the underprivileged, sick, *elderly*, disabled, women and children.²

The Senior Citizens Act (Republic Act 7432), as amended by the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010 (Republic Act 9994), aims to "adopt measures whereby our senior citizens are assisted and appreciated by the community as a whole" and to "establish a program beneficial to the senior citizens, their families and the rest of the community that they serve."³ Unfortunately, the provision of Philhealth coverage (introduced through R.A. 9994) was only limited to *indigent* senior citizens in the Senior Citizens Act. This bill aims to remedy this oversight by deleting the qualification of being an indigent in the concerned section of the law and by sourcing the funds to implement this program from the National Health Insurance Fund of Philhealth.

It must be noted that the national policies contained in both the Constitution and the Senior Citizens Act clearly provide that all of the elderly shall be given preferential care and protection by the State. Being an indigent should not be a requisite for our senior citizens to avail of mandatory free Philhealth coverage. A good majority of our senior citizens are already retired and most of them no longer have a steady source of income to support themselves. Furthermore, senior citizens, due to their mature age, are in need of regular medical treatment. The medical bills amassed by the senior citizens, coupled with their lack of regular income due to retirement, have been extremely burdensome for our elderly.

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


JERRY P. TREÑAS

¹ Article XV, Section 4(4) of the 1987 Philippine Constitution.

² Article XIII, Section 11 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution.

³ Section 1 (3), Republic Act 7432 (April 23, 1992)

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14 AN ACT EXPANDING THE COVERAGE OF MANDATORY PHILHEALTH
15 COVERAGE TO ALL SENIOR CITIZENS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE
16 REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7432, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9994,
17 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "EXPANDED SENIOR CITIZENS ACT OF 2010"
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19 *Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress*
20 *assembled:*

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22 **Section 1.** Section 5, sub-paragraph h(2) of Republic Act 7432, as amended by Republic
23 Act 9994, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

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25
26 "SEC. 5. *Government Assistance.* – The government shall provide the following:

27
28 "xxx

29
30 "(h) Additional Government Assistance

31
32 "(1) xxx

33
34 (2) Mandatory Philhealth Coverage

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36 "All [indigent] senior citizens shall be covered by the national health insurance
37 program of Philhealth. FUNDS NECESSARY TO ENSURE THE
38 ENROLLMENT OF ALL SENIOR CITIZENS SHALL BE SOURCED FROM
39 THE NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE FUND OF PHILHEALTH [The
40 LGUs where the indigent senior citizen resides shall allocate the necessary funds
41 to ensure the enrollment of their indigent senior citizens], in accordance with
42 pertinent laws and regulations.

43
44 "(3) xxx.

45
46 **Section 2. *Repealing Clause.*** – All provisions of laws, orders, decrees, including rules

1 and regulations inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed and/or modified accordingly.

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3 **Section 3. Effectivity.** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in
4 the *Official Gazette* or in a national newspaper of general circulation.

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6 *Approved,*