

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City



Sixteenth Congress
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **5431**

Introduced by Honorable Rogelio J. Espina

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to establish a mother and child health care program to protect Filipino mothers and children from malnutrition and appropriating funds therefor.

The World Health Organization of the United Nations strongly recommends proper health care on the first 1,000 days of a child. From the start of pregnancy until the second year of the child is the most crucial stage of the child's brain formation. The right nutrition during this 1,000 days has a profound impact on the ability of the child to grow, learn and lead a long-term healthy and stable life.

The 2013 national nutrition survey conducted by the Food and Nutrition Research Institute-Department of Science and Technology (FNRI-DOST) shows a significant increase in cases of child malnutrition. While mortality rate for children under five years old has declined slightly in recent years from 54 deaths per 1,000 births in 1988-1992 to 48 deaths in 1993-1997, infant mortality rates have remained unchanged at about 35 deaths per 1,000 births.

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) noted that because two-thirds of all births are delivered at home, only 56% of mothers receive assistance from health professionals during the delivery of their children. The Philippines has a high maternal mortality rate of approximately 200 deaths per 100,000 live births. According to the 2000 State of the Philippine Population Report, ten Filipino women die every twenty-four hours from causes related to pregnancy complications and childbirth. One of the reasons is the irregular or lack of prenatal check-ups.

From 2012, the Food and Nutrition Research Institute reported that 25%, or one in every four pregnant women is undernourished. They are at risk to deliver low birth weight babies and other negative pregnancy outcomes such as still births, miscarriages and abortions. The nutrition status of lactating mothers are 11.9% or one in every ten lactating mothers are underweight.

During pregnancy, undernutrition can have a devastating effect on the growth and development of a child. Babies who are malnourished in the womb have a higher risk of dying in infancy and are more likely to face lifelong cognitive and physical defects and chronic health problems. Children under the age of two will have weak immune system and more susceptible to dying from common illnesses such as pneumonia, diarrhea and malaria.

This bill therefore seeks to protect the Filipino mothers and children from malnutrition by institutionalizing a maternal and child health care program in every local government unit. There is an imperative need to provide prenatal and postnatal maternity care service to a pregnant woman in order to protect her health as well as ensure the nutritional diet of her newborn child to eradicate malnutrition.

In order to have a future generation of youth who are physically and mentally healthy, approval of this bill is highly and earnestly recommended



ROGELIO J. ESPINA
Congressman
Lone District of Biliran

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AN ACT

**ESTABLISHING A MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH CARE
PROGRAM TO PROTECT FILIPINO MOTHERS AND CHILDREN
FROM MALNUTRITION AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

SECTION 1. The Department of Health (DOH) shall, in coordination
with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the
Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), develop a
comprehensive health care program for pregnant and lactating women as well
as the health and nutrition of their newborn children from day 1 to 1,000 days.

For purposes of this Act, the “1,000 days” start from day one of
pregnancy up to the age of two (2) years of the child.

SEC. 2. The maternal and child health care services which may be
provided to eligible individuals during the 1,000-day period include the
following:

a) Instruction and counselling regarding future health care for the
mother and child;

- 1 b) Nutrition counselling;
- 2 c) Counselling and education concerning all aspects of prenatal care,
- 3 childbirth and motherhood;
- 4 d) Milk-feeding program for pregnant and nursing mothers, including
- 5 breastfeeding for new-born children;
- 6 e) Treating malnourished children with special and therapeutic foods;
- 7 and
- 8 f) General family counselling, including child and family
- 9 development.

10 Pregnant women and their new-born children up to the age of two (2)
11 years, shall be entitled to receive maternal and child health care services
12 provided in this section.

13 SEC. 3. Appropriations - The amount necessary for the implementation
14 of this Act shall be charged to the current appropriations for the Department of
15 Health. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for the continued
16 implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General
17 Appropriations Act.

18 SEC 4. Implementing Rules and Regulations - Within ninety (90) days
19 from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Health shall, in coordination
20 with the Secretary of the Interior and Local Government and Secretary of of
21 Social Welfare and Development promulgate rules and regulations necessary
22 for the effective implementation of this Act.

1 SEC. 5. Repealing Clause – All laws, decrees, executive orders,
2 administrative orders or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this
3 Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

4 SEC. 6. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in
5 the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

6 Approved,