

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

House Bill No. **6154**



Introduced by Representative Estrellita "Ging" B. Suansing

According to statistics, cancer remains to be the third leading cause of morbidity and mortality in the country.¹ Aside from the physical and emotional toll seen in people diagnosed with the disease, the economic cost of having cancer also has a profound impact on the family's resources. Many of those affected are the breadwinners and heads of the family, often resulting to loss of income and savings due to the overwhelming cost of treatment.

In today's age and technology, one-third of cancers are preventable; one-third is curable if detected early.² Screening increases the chances of detecting certain cancers early, when they are most likely to be curable. Presently, though, there is low cancer prevention awareness among the Filipino population and most of the diagnosed cases are symptomatic and in its advanced stages. Hence, cancer survival rates remain low.

This bill hopes to help increase the chances of Filipinos, especially those in the working class – minimum wage earners³ – survive the deadly disease that is cancer by reinforcing cancer prevention programs already in place, and more importantly, by providing a free cancer screening and early detection program, including free HPV vaccination, for qualified eligible beneficiaries.

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


ESTRELLITA B. SUANSING
1st District, Nueva Ecija

¹ DOH Leading Causes of Mortality | <http://www.doh.gov.ph/node/198.html>

² Factfile: State of Cancer Treatment in the Philippines | <http://medicalobserverph.com>

³ As defined in RA 9504

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR A FREE CANCER PREVENTION, SCREENING AND
EARLY DETECTION PROGRAM FOR WORKING CLASS FILIPINOS IN ALL
GOVERNMENT HEALTH FACILITIES NATIONWIDE AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. Title. – This Act shall be known as the “Cancer Prevention, Screening and Early Detection Act.”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is declared the policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people. Likewise, it is the policy of the State to adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall endeavor to make health care, medicines and other social services available to all people at affordable cost.

To this end, the State shall endeavor to prevent and control diseases among high-risk groups, especially those belonging in the working class, through a free prevention, screening and early detection of cancer.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. – As used in this Act, the term:

- (A) “Working class” shall refer to Filipinos who are minimum wage earners; and
- (B) “Minimum wage earner” shall refer to a worker in the private sector paid the statutory minimum wage, or to an employee in the public sector with compensation income of not more than the statutory minimum wage in the non-agricultural sector where he/she is assigned.

SEC. 4. Cancer Prevention Program. – The Department of Health (DOH), in coordination with the local government units through its local health officers, shall carry out and reinforce cancer prevention programs already in place, the purposes of which are as follows:

- (A) To educate the importance of good nutrition and maintaining a healthy lifestyle as a form of prevention all forms of cancer;
- (B) To educate on the risk factors for all forms of cancer;
- (C) To educate on the common signs and symptoms of cancer, especially on the common forms of cancer identified in the Philippines;
- (D) To educate on the proper techniques of self-examination, for example, breast self-examination (BSE) for breast cancer;
- (E) To educate on the need to periodically undergo physical examinations, including the frequency and type of each examinations appropriate for each age group, and which form of cancer the physical examination is for (i.e. clinical breast exam for breast cancer, digital rectal examination for prostate cancer, among others);
- (F) To educate on the availability of immunization as part of cancer prevention; and
- (G) To educate on the availability and appropriateness of procedures for detecting the cancer in its early stages.

SEC. 5. Free Human Pappiloma Virus (HPV) Vaccination. – All government health facilities nationwide shall provide free Human Pappiloma Virus (HPV) vaccination, as part of the prevention against cervical cancer, to qualified eligible beneficiaries included in high risk groups identified by the DOH.

SEC. 6. Free Screening and Early Detection Program. – All government health facilities nationwide shall provide free cancer screening and early detection program for all qualified eligible beneficiaries, the frequency of screening and ages at which screening should be performed shall be determined by the DOH. The following screening and early detection procedures shall be made free and available for all qualified eligible beneficiaries:

- (A) Mammogram
- (B) Fine Needle Aspiration Biopsy
- (C) Pap Smear/Pap Test
- (D) Fecal Occult Blood Testing
- (E) Colonoscopy
- (F) Prostate Ultrasound

SEC. 7. Qualified Eligible Beneficiaries. – The Free HPV Vaccination and Free Screening and Early Detection Program shall be restricted to qualified recipients who are:

- (A) Identified as head of the family and/or the breadwinner through a Social Case Study made by a social worker from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) or through their BIR Income Tax Return;
- (B) Has a gross annual income of not greater than Php 100,000.00 as reflected in their BIR Income Tax Return; and
- (C) Belongs to the high risk group identified by the DOH.

SEC. 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The DOH, in coordination of the DSWD, shall promulgate and issue the necessary guidelines for the implementation of this Act within sixty (60) days after its effectivity.

SEC. 9. *Appropriations.* – The Secretary of the DOH shall immediately include in the Department's program the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 10. *Separability Clause.* – If, for any reason, a provision or part hereof is declared invalid, other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 11. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 12. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days upon its publication in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,