

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila
SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

H.B. No. **4756**



Introduced by Representative H. Harry L. Roque Jr.

**AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A NATIONAL IRON DEFICIENCY
AWARENESS PROGRAM, AND PROVISION OF FREE IRON SUPPLEMENTS IN
HEALTH CENTERS**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution provides in Article II, Section 15 that, “[t]he state shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.”

Iron Deficiency Anemia (IDA) is the most alarming micronutrient deficiency in the country. It afflicts half of pregnant Filipinos. Not only are these women at risk for developing fatal complications during child birth, their children are also more likely to develop IDA. It is the leading cause of years lived with disability among Filipino children, as one in four of them suffer impaired muscle function, energy generation, and brain development due to IDA.

The technical feasibility of eradicating IDA is the most researched topic in nutrition science. Iron fortified foods have been developed since the 1940s. While technologies such as food fortification have been enacted since the year 2000, the trend of iron deficiency among women of child bearing age still worsens.

To curb these trends, the WHO recommends daily elemental iron of 60mg supplements to all pregnant women in our setting. Unfortunately, a majority of women are aware of this nutrition opportunity, much less consume the recommended daily amount.

This bill will add sustained policy support to decrease the disease burden of IDA by providing a National Iron Deficiency Education Campaign to afford women their options in better nourishing themselves. This bill also provides funding to provide free iron supplements in health centers. Foregoing premises considered, the immediate approval of this bill is earnestly solicited.



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

PART I

Introductory Provisions

Section 1. **Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “Iron Deficiency Awareness and Prevention Act”.

Sec. 2. **Promotion of the Beneficial Effects of Iron Supplementation among Women of Child Bearing Age.**– The Department of Health (DOH) shall carry out a program, directly or through special arrangements with other government agencies and other promotional entities engaged in public information activities, to provide education and training for health professionals and the general public for purposes of explaining the effects of iron in preventing morbidity and mortality in the obstetric and pediatric populations, and encourage women of reproductive capacity to consume the appropriate amount of iron as a dietary supplement on a daily basis.

Pursuant thereto, the Secretary of Health may consult the appropriate public and private entities, including national nonprofit and nongovernment organizations, health professionals, and health insurance and health plan providers, to ensure the success of such education and training program. Additionally, the Secretary shall, directly or in tandem with other sectors, provide technical assistance to public and non-profit private organizations to fulfill the mandate provided for in Sections 2 and 3 hereof.

Sec. 3. Continuing Research and Study on the Effects of Iron Supplementation. –

The DOH shall conduct continuing studies on the effects of iron to increase the understanding of the same on the health of the citizenry, especially its contribution to the prevention of morbidity and mortality in the obstetric and pediatric population. It shall likewise conduct research with respect to such education and training, including identifying effective strategies for increasing the rate of consumption of iron by women of reproductive capacity. In addition, it shall provide for appropriate activities regarding iron deficiency anemia and its complications.

Sec. 4. Evaluation of Program Implementation. – The Secretary of Health shall cause the review of the program to evaluate the activities carried out, pursuant to Sections 2 and 3 hereof, have been effective in fulfilling the goals of the program, including their effect on different sectors of the population. Methods of evaluation to be undertaken pursuant thereto include surveys of knowledge and attitudes on the consumption of iron supplements on serum iron levels, and the complete and timely treatment of infants born with IDA.

Sec. 5. Free Iron Supplements in Health Centers. – This Act also provides for funding for free iron supplements in barangay health centers for pregnant women under the care of a health professional.

Sec. 6. **Funding.** – The Secretary of Health shall 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. 7. **Separability Clause.** – If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected thereby shall remain valid and subsisting.

Sec. 8. **Repealing Clause.** – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

Sec. 9. **Effectivity Clause.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette.

Approved,