

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **5531**



Introduced by Honorable Michael L. Romero and Enrico A. Pineda

EXPLANATORY NOTE

An **emerging infectious disease** (EID) is an infectious disease whose incidence has increased in the past 20 years and could increase in the near future. Emerging infections account for at least 12% of all human pathogens. EIDs are caused by newly identified species or strains (e.g. Severe acute respiratory syndrome, HIV/AIDS) that may have evolved from a known infection (e.g. influenza) or spread to a new population (e.g. West Nile fever) or to an area undergoing ecologic transformation (e.g. Lyme disease), or be *reemerging* infections, like drug resistant tuberculosis.

Nosocomial (hospital-acquired) infections, such as Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* are emerging in hospitals, and extremely problematic in that they are resistant to many antibiotics. Of growing concern are adverse synergistic interactions between emerging diseases and other infectious and non-infectious conditions leading to the development of novel syndemics. Many emerging diseases are zoonotic - an animal reservoir incubates the organism, with only occasional transmission into human populations.

This House Bill seeks to promote the creation of an inter-agency that will specifically deal with the threats of this emerging diseases, provide awareness and information disseminations, develop control mechanisms incase of outbreaks.

Earnest approval of this bill is hereby requested.



MICHAEL L. ROMERO Ph.D



ENRICO A. PINEDA

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**AN ACT
CREATING THE “EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES AUTHORITY”
(EIDA), TO PROTECT AND PROMOTE THE RIGHT TO HEALTH OF THE
PEOPLE AND INSTILL HEALTH CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG THEM,
PROVIDING FUNDS THEREOF, DEFINING ITS POWERS AND
FUNCTIONS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

SECTION 1. Declaration of Policy – the state is hereby mandated to foster the promotion, protection, preservation or restoration of the health of the people through the provision and delivery of health services and through the regulation and encouragement of providers of health goods and services;

The state shall be aware of the emergence of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), Avian Influenza, Ebola, and the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) infections have been acknowledged by the global community to cause potential public health emergencies of international concern;

The state shall be alarmed of the recurrent threats of other diseases, such as Meningococccemia, Leptospirosis, Antimicrobial Resistance of Tuberculosis, and other bacterial, viral and parasitic diseases that contribute to the high incidence of infectious diseases in the country;

The international proliferation of these diseases persist due to increased globalization and mobility of travelers and products, and thus, threatens the lives and safety of Filipinos both here and abroad, as well as the Philippine economy in general; and

The state shall, in the event that any or a combination of these diseases result in multi-country outbreaks that can lead to epidemics and even a worldwide pandemic, there is a need for an inter-sectoral collaboration to establish preparedness and ensure efficient government response to assess, monitor, contain, control, and prevent the spread of any potential epidemic in the Philippines. Towards this end,

The State shall hereby provide a separate authorize funding of Five Hundred million pesos (**P500,000,000.00**) to evolve and implement a comprehensive national program to the suppression of these infectious diseases and other serious threats alike and to maintain the continuity of its mandate.

SECTION 2. Appropriations — The amount of Five Hundred million pesos (**P500,000,000.00**) necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act shall be included in the annual budget of the implementing agency in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) of the year following its enactment into law and every year thereafter.

The state shall hereby authorize the Department of Health (DOH) to re-align its appropriations, in the current year of the date of the effectivity of this Act to conform with its mandate and requirements.

SECTION 3. Creation and Composition. The Authority on Emerging Infectious Diseases (EIDA), hereinafter referred to as the "Authority," is hereby created, to be composed of representatives from the following:

Department of Health (DOH) as <i>Chairperson</i>
Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA)
Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG)
Department of Justice (DOJ)
Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)
Department of Tourism (DOT)
Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC)

The Authority may call upon any department, bureau, office, agency or instrumentality of the government, including Government-Owned or –Controlled Corporations (GOCCs), government financial institutions (GFIs), local government units (LGUs), non-government organizations (NGOs) and the private sector for assistance as the circumstances and exigencies may require.

Further, the DOH Secretary may recommend to the President the enlistment of the Armed Forces of the Philippines to supplement the Philippine National Police and other law enforcement agencies for the purpose of enforcing the quarantine of specific areas or facilitating the transport of EID patients, and for such other purposes for the effective implementation of this Order.

The duly authorized representatives of the member-agencies of the Authority shall have a rank not lower than Assistant Secretary.

SECTION 4. Powers and Functions. The Task Force shall have the following powers and functions:

- a)** Establish a system to identify, screen, and assist Filipinos suspected or confirmed to be infected with EID;
- b)** Prevent and/or minimize the entry of suspected or confirmed patients with EID into the country. This should include rigid screening and identification of EID suspects, and the institutionalization of a surveillance, alert, and quarantine system in all ports of entry;
- c)** Prevent and/or minimize the local spread of EID in the country through the establishment or reinforcement of a system in screening possible patients infected with EID, contact tracing, identification of the mode of exposure to the virus, and implementation of effective quarantine and proper isolation procedures;
- d)** Prevent and/or minimize mortality through effective clinical management by capacitating healthcare facilities, government and private medical practitioners, healthcare workers, and public safety enforcers;
- e)** Educate the public on EID and its prevention, control and management to promote positive health behaviors, and address public fear and anxiety through the conduct of a nationwide EID awareness campaign;

- f)** Adopt measures to strengthen the Emerging and Re-Emerging Infectious Diseases Program of the DOH or its equivalent in other local health units;
- g)** Notify the WHO of the EID cases in the country and its assessment of the EID situation;
- h)** Submit to the Office of the President regular status reports in the monitoring of EID;
- i)** Formulate, develop, implement, and oversee the EID Preparedness Manual for the prevention and control of EID; and
- j)** Perform such other functions and activities as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Order, or as the President may direct.

SECTION 5. Development and Organization - A comprehensive and sustainable EID Preparedness Manual shall be formulated and developed in order to address government response and protocol in managing EID cases. The manual shall include but not be limited to the following:

- a)** Quarantine and immediate containment of EID within ports of entry;
- b)** Epidemiological investigation and contact tracing;
- c)** Treatment of infected cases and containment of affected areas;
- d)** Formulation of a risk communication plan and EID materials for the general public; and
- e)** Respective responsibilities of government agencies/instrumentalities.

SECTION 6. Periodic Reports - The EIDA shall submit periodic reports on its findings and make recommendations on actions to be taken by Congress and Senate and the appropriate department, and in order to carry out the objectives and mandates of this Act.

SECTION 7. Automatic Review - Every three **(3) years** after the effectivity of this Act, an independent review panel composed of experts to be appointed by the President shall review the policies and programs in the EIDA with coordination of the Department of Health (DOH) and shall make recommendations, based on its findings, to the President and to both Houses of Congress.

SECTION 8. Repealing Clause. All laws, executive orders, issuances, rules and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby amended, repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 9. Separability Clause. If, for any reason or reasons, any portion or provision of this Act shall be held unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 10. Effectivity Clause. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,