

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

Second Regular Session
SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

HOUSE BILL No. 7391



Introduced by: REPRESENTATIVE EMI CALIXTO-RUBIANO

Explanatory Note

This bill seeks to establish a free medicine assistance program for the poor in consonance with the 1987 Constitution which provides that *"The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them"*.

Social justice is caring for the poor, a continuing and sincere concern for the underprivileged, and a genuine and serious effort to improve their quality of life. Nowadays, there is a growing sentiment of the poor that they are being neglected by the government. Many of them die of sickness not because their cases are terminal but because they hardly afford the medicines necessary to restore their health. We must, therefore, pursue the declared policy of the State to promote the right to health and well-being of the people and to adopt a system of sustaining the delivery of free medicines to those who have less in life, giving priority to the underprivileged, the sick, the elderly, the disabled and the poorest of the poor.

The greatest wealth of a nation is its people. Thus, the government shall ensure that no sick person will be deprived of his right to medical attention including the supply of medicines despite his financial status. It is likewise mandated to reduce social inequalities and provide medical care to the poor.

The "Free Medicines for the Poor Act" is an effective measure to counter the inaccessibility of medicines to our underprivileged and impoverished populace. It seeks to bridge the growing gap between health and poverty, by providing the poor medicines that would help them remain healthy and productive individuals.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emi Calixto-Rubiano".

EMI CALIXTO-RUBIANO
Representative
Lone District of Pasay City

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HOUSE BILL No. _____

Introduced by: **REPRESENTATIVE EMI CALIXTO-RUBIANO**

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A FREE BASIC MEDICINE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN ALL GOVERNMENT HEALTH FACILITIES NATIONWIDE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Free Basic Medicine Assistance Act.”

Section 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health and well-being of every Filipino to adopt a system of implementing the delivery of free basic medicines to those who have less in life in all health facilities in the country, giving priority to the underprivileged, ailing, malnourished, elderly, women and children, disabled, and the poorest of the poor.

Section 3. *Objectives.* – This Act pursues the following objectives:

- a) to promote optimal health and well-being of every Filipino by improved access to medicines; and
- b) to address the health needs of marginalized sectors such as the poor, malnourished, the elderly, women, children and disabled by the establishment of a Free Basic Medicine Assistance Program in all government facilities nationwide.

Section 4. *Establishment of Free Basic Medicine Assistance Program.* – There shall be established a Free Basic Medicine Assistance Program, hereinafter referred to as the “Libreng Gamot Program”, to be administered by the Department of Health (DOH) through government district hospitals, local health units and barangay health centers in all cities and municipalities, in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

Section 5. *Eligible Beneficiaries.* - The *Libreng Gamot* Program shall be restricted to qualified poor recipients as certified by the barangay and DSWD officials.

Section 6. *Availment of Free Basic Medicines.* - Free basic medicines shall be made available in all government district hospitals, barangay health centers, and local health units. These health units shall account for all the medicines released to qualified beneficiaries through the submission of quarterly reports to the Department of Health.

Section 7. *Appropriations.* - The amount needed for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the appropriations of the Department of Health. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Section 8. *Rules and Regulations.* - The DOH, in coordination with the DSWD, and in consultation with the Philippine Medical Association (PMA), shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to effectively implement the provisions of this Act within six (6) months from the effectivity hereof.

Section 9. *Separability Clause.* - If any part or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, other parts or provisions thereof which are not affected shall continue to be in full force and effect

Section 10. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, and other issuances, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 11. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,