

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. **7665**



Introduced by **MAGDALO Party-List Representative**
HON. GARY C. ALEJANO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article II, Section 15 and Article XIII, Section 11 of the 1987 Constitution provides for the promotion and protection of the right to health of the people, as well as the State's mandate to adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development.

However, despite such mandates, there remains glaring deficiencies in the strategies employed to combat a plethora of public health issues, among which is the high incidence of vision defects and abnormalities. In 2017, the DOH has reported that over 2 million people across the country are blind or suffering from some kind of visual impairment. Specifically, an estimated 332,150 Filipinos are bilaterally blind, while the current number of persons with bilateral low vision is at 2,179,733. Of the total number of bilaterally blind, 33 percent or about 109,609 cases were due to cataract, while 25 percent was caused by error in refraction. 14 percent was due to glaucoma.

As such, this proposed measure seeks to establish a National Sight Strategy that shall provide for a comprehensive national plan to combat the prevalence of vision impairment. It provides a framework for the effective use and distribution of resources, prioritizes the collection and dissemination of all relevant data, promotes the practice of eye care professionals, and permits the use of public facilities for a more accessible vision care service system.

The eye is the mirror with which we experience the world, without it, one's life would be deprived of the joy of seeing the world's splendid colors, its friendly smiles, and the familiar faces with whom we find so much to love. Nobody, not if it is fully preventable, has to suffer such impairment, and the State being the guarantors of its people's health and well-being, must do all that it can in its power to secure to its people a vision that shall pierce through a brighter future.

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


GARY C. ALEJANO
Representative

Magdalo Para sa Pilipino Party-List

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AN ACT
TO ESTABLISH THE NATIONAL SIGHT STRATEGY PLAN

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

SECTION 1. Title.—This Act shall be known as the National Sight Strategy Plan.

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.—The physical well-being of the citizenry, including their vision health, is a primary concern of the State. The role of vision care professionals and providers, including ophthalmologists, optometrists, and opticians, in safeguarding and enhancing the vision health of Filipinos, including preventing blindness, is recognized and shall be strengthened.

SEC. 3. National Sight Strategy.—

a. The Department of Health (DOH), within one year from the effectivity of this Act and in consultation with all stakeholders in the field of vision care, shall formulate a National Sight Strategy that shall address the following:

1. The collection, collation, organization and publication of data and statistics on the incidence and prevalence of vision abnormalities such as blindness, errors of refraction, and common eye diseases, and the causes of such medical conditions.

2. The formulation and implementation of a comprehensive national strategy to address vision health issues including the prevention and treatment of blindness and visual defects, deployment of personnel, allocation of public resources, and public education to increase awareness of the importance of protecting and improving vision health at all ages.

3. The promotion and development, in the underserved areas in the country, of the study and practice of vision health related professionals such as ophthalmology, optometry, and opticianry.

1 4. The undertaking of studies and consultation to formulate recommendations
2 on the inclusion of vision care services in national health programs such as
3 PhilHealth.
4

5 b. As part of the National Sight Strategy, all national and local government
6 healthcare facilities such as hospitals, medical centers, and clinics, shall be made available for
7 the establishment of eye care clinics or centers where eye care professionals can provide ready
8 access to quality vision care, especially to those who could not otherwise afford them.
9

10 **SEC. 4. Appropriations.**—The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act
11 shall be charged against the available appropriations of the DOH under the current General
12 Appropriations Act. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for its continued implementation
13 shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.
14

15 **SEC. 5. Reporting.**—DOH shall submit, upon completion, the National Sight Strategy Plans
16 to the Senate and the House of Representatives.
17

18 **SEC. 6. Repealing Clause.**— All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations, or other
19 issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed.
20

21 **SEC. 7. Separability Clause.**—Should any provision herein be declared unconstitutional,
22 the same shall not affect the validity of the other provisions of this Act.
23

24 **SEC. 8. Effectivity.**—This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the
25 Official Gazette in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,