

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

17th Congress
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **7991**



Introduced by: **HON. LORNA C. SILVERIO**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The State has the primary task of instilling health awareness and promoting the right to health of the people as enshrined in Section 15 of Article II of our Constitution. Social justice being the backbone of the common man is highly regarded by the State.

Given this, Congress enacted Republic Act no. 9439, or "An Act Prohibiting the Detention of Patients in Hospitals and Medical Clinics on the Ground of Nonpayment of Hospital bills or Medical Expenses", which pertains primarily to the illegal detention of patients who are unable to settle their hospital bills on the spot. While the detention part is being addressed by this law, the interest earned by the principal hospital balance accrues over time and adds up to the agony and stress of the less privileged patients looking for means to settle the debt.

This bill prohibits the imposition of additional interest and penalty charges on unpaid hospital bills for one year upon discharge. It also extends to patients who are minors, whose parents belong to the less privileged or the minimum wage earners or less. It gives them a chance to secure payment without interest for a year and to at least recover from the physical, emotional and financial burden brought about by the crisis in their families.

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


LORNA C. SILVERIO

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AN ACT PROHIBITING THE IMPOSITION OF INTEREST AND/OR PENALTY CHARGES
ON UNPAID HOSPITAL BILLS AND MEDICAL EXPENSES TO PATIENTS WHO EARN
MINIMUM WAGE OR LESS

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

SECTION 1. Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the State to protect the right to health of the people.

SECTION 2. Prohibition on Interest and/or Penalty Charges on Unpaid Hospital Bills or Medical Expenses. - It shall be unlawful for any hospital or medical clinic in the country to charge or impose other penalties on unpaid hospital bills and medical expenses of patients who earn minimum wage or less, for one year from the date of discharge.

This prohibition shall likewise apply to the unpaid hospital bills and medical expenses of minor patients whose parents or legal guardians earn minimum wage or less.

Any officer or employee of the hospital or medical clinic responsible for billing and violates the provision of this Act shall be punished by a fine of not less than Twenty Thousand Pesos (Php 20,000.00) but not more than Fifty Thousand Pesos (Php 50,000.00), or imprisonment of not less than one (1) month but not more than six (6), or both such fine and imprisonment, at the discretion of the proper court.

SECTION 3. Implementing Rules and Regulations – The Department of Health shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act within ninety (90) days from effectivity of this Act.

SECTION 4. Repealing Clause – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, and issuances inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 5. Effectivity – This Act shall take effect immediately upon its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Leni L. Robredo".