



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila



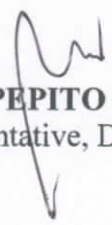
SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

House Bill No. 8597

Introduced by **DIWA Party-list Representative Pepito M. Pico**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

According to the Center for Disease Control, folic acid "is an important part of preconception health, which refers to the health of women and men during their reproductive years. If a woman consumes the recommended amount of folic acid before and during early pregnancy, it can help prevent some major birth defects of the baby's brain (known as anencephaly) and spine (known as spina bifida)."¹ Consistent with the mandate of the Constitution to safeguard the lives and well-being of mothers and children, a refiling of HB 762 of former DIWA Party-list Rep. Emmeline Villar, seeks to increase awareness with regard to the benefits of folic acid.


PEPITO M. PICO

Representative, DIWA Party-list

¹ <http://www.cdc.gov/features/folicacidbenefits/> [Accessed 9 May 2016]



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**AN ACT TO PROVIDE A NATIONAL FOLIC EDUCATION PROGRAM TO
PREVENT BIRTH DEFECTS**

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the "Folic Acid Promotion and Birth Defects Prevention Act".

SECTION 2. Promotion of the Beneficial Effects of Folic Acid in the Prevention of Birth Defects. – The Department of Health 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 folic acid in preventing birth defects and to encourage women of reproductive capacity to consume the appropriate amount of folic acid as a dietary supplement on a daily basis.

Pursuant thereto, the Secretary of Health may consult with the appropriate public or 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. In addition, the Secretary shall, directly or through partnership with other sectors, provide technical assistance to public and nonprofit private organizations to fulfill the mandate provided for in Sections 2 and 3 hereof.

SECTION 3. Continuing Research and Study on the Effects of Folic Acid. – The Department of Health shall conduct continuing studies on the effects of folic acid to increase the understanding of the same on the health of the citizenry, especially its contribution to the

prevention of birth defects, cleft lip and palate, and heart defects. It shall likewise conduct research with respect to such education and training, including identifying effective strategies for increasing the rate of consumption of folic acid by women of reproductive capacity. In addition, it shall provide for appropriate epidemiological activities regarding folic acid, birth defects and neural tube defects,

SECTION 4. Evaluation of Program Implementation. – The Secretary of Health shall cause the review of the program to evaluate the extent to which 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 may include surveys of knowledge and attitudes on the consumption of folic acid and on blood folate levels, and the complete and timely monitoring of infants Who are born With neural tube defects,

SECTION 5. 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.

SECTION 6. 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.

SECTION 7. 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,

SECTION 8. Effectivity Clause – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette.

Approved,