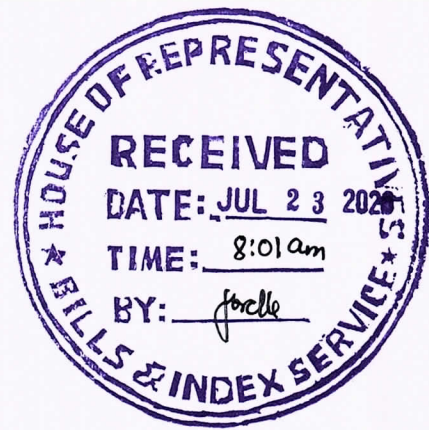


Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 7156



INTRODUCED BY
REP. ALFRED VARGAS

AN ACT
AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11332, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE
"MANDATORY REPORTING OF NOTIFIABLE DISEASES AND HEALTH
EVENTS OF PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERN ACT"

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Republic Act No. 11332, otherwise known as the "Mandatory Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Health Events of Public Health Concern Act", provides for mechanisms necessary for an effective response system in compliance with the 2005 International Health Regulations (IHR) of the World Health Organization.

However, with the confirmed local transmission of the Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) in the country, there are provisions in the law that need revision and further strengthening especially on more aggressive government efforts and interventions.

This bill seeks to require the Department of Health to issue clear guidelines on the systematic reporting and recording of notifiable diseases and health events of public health concern. Furthermore, it shall also require all public and private institutions to provide necessary information in disease surveillance and other epidemiological investigations.

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

ALFRED VARGAS

Republic of the Philippines
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EVENTS OF PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERN ACT"**

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

SECTION 1. Section 6 of Republic Act No. 11332 is hereby amended to add the following:

"SEC. 6. Mandatory Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Health Events of Public Concern. - The DOH, through the Epidemiology Bureau, shall issue the official list of institutionalized public health information system, disease surveillance and response systems for mandatory reporting of notifiable diseases and health events of public concern provided in Section 5 of this Act. This official list shall include the Field Health Service Information System (FHSIS), the Philippine Integrated Disease Surveillance Response (PIDSRS) System with its Case-Based Surveillance and Event10 based Surveillance, and other duly institutionalized public health disease surveillance and response systems of the DOH.

"Under this Act:

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"(e) To perform their disease surveillance and response functions, authorized health personnel from the DOH and its local counterparts have the statutory and regulatory authority to enforce the following:

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"(6) ESTABLISHMENT OF SUB-NATIONAL LABORATORIES IN ALL DOH2

RUN REGIONAL HOSPITALS IN THE COUNTRY WHICH SHALL HAVE THE CAPACITY TO UNDERTAKE TESTING, DIAGNOSIS, CONTROL AND PREVENTION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES. LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS MAY ALSO ESTABLISH THEIR OWN LABORATORIES AND/OR PARTNER WITH PRIVATE HOSPITALS AND LABORATORIES IN THE CONDUCT OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE SURVEILLANCE: PROVIDED, THAT THE LABORATORIES SHALL BE DULY ACCREDITED AND APPROVED BY THE DOH.

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"(H) ALL HOSPITALS, CLINICS, HEALTH FACILITIES, LABORATORIES, RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS, WORKPLACES, SCHOOLS, PRISONS, PORTS, AIRPORTS, COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS, AND RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES ARE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE NECESSARY INFORMATION TO AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL OF THE DOH AND OTHER AUTHORIZED AGENCIES INCLUDING LOCAL COUNTERPARTS INVOLVED IN DISEASE SURVEILLANCE INCLUDING CONTACT TRACING: PROVIDED, THAT SUCH REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE INFORMATION SHOULD BE EXEMPTED IN THE PROVISION OF THE DATA PRIVACY ACT ON ACCESSIBILITY OF DATA;

"(I) THE DOH SHALL ESTABLISH HOTLINES AND OTHER FORMS OF ACCESS WHERE THE PUBLIC CAN REPORT NOTIFIABLE DISEASES AND HEALTH EVENTS OF PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERN;

"(J) THE DOH SHALL ISSUE CLEAR GUIDELINES ON THE SYSTEMATIC REPORTING AND RECORDING OF NOTIFIABLE DISEASES AND HEALTH EVENTS OF PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERN, PARTICULARLY, ON THE NUMBER OF CONFIRMED CASES, DEATHS, SUSPECTED AND PROBABLE CASES; AND

"(K) THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE AND ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES SHALL ASSIST THE DOH IN THE CONDUCT OF CONTACT TRACING AND OTHER EPIDEMIOLOGIC INVESTIGATIONS WHERE THE ASSISTANCE OF UNIFORMED PERSONNEL ARE NECESSARY."

SECTION 2. *Section 7 of Republic Act No. 11332 is hereby amended to read as follows:*

"The Secretary of Health shall have the authority to declare epidemics of national and/or international concerns [except when the same threatens national security in which case, the President of the Republic of the Philippines shall declare a State of Public Health Emergency and mobilize governmental and nongovernmental agencies to respond to the threat.] IN WHICH CASE THE INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES (IATF-EID) CREATED UNDER EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 168, S. 2014 SHALL IMMEDIATELY CONVENE. THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES SHALL HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO DECLARE A STATE OF

PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY UPON THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE IATF-EID OR UPON THE DECLARATION OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION OF A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY OF INTERNATIONAL CONCERN. THE STATE OF PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY SHALL AUTHORIZE THE PRESIDENT TO MOBILIZE GOVERNMENTAL AND NONGOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES TO RESPOND TO THE THREAT, AND TO EXERCISE OF MEASURES PROVIDED IN REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10121 WHEN A STATE OF CALAMITY EXISTS.

"THE IATF-EID SHALL, WITHIN NINETY (90) DAYS FROM THE APPROVAL OF THIS ACT, FORMULATE A NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY STRATEGY TO ADDRESS PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES. THIS STRATEGY SHALL PROVIDE FOR AN INTEGRATED POLICY COORDINATION AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION WITH RESPECT TO ALL MATTERS RELATED TO NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH AND MEDICAL PREPAREDNESS, AND EXECUTION AND DEPLOYMENT OF NATIONAL RESPONSE BEFORE, DURING, AND FOLLOWING PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES. THE STRATEGY SHALL ALSO INCLUDE THE IDENTIFICATION OF QUARANTINE OR ISOLATION FACILITIES IN EVERY PROVINCE.

"THE IATF-EID SHALL FORMULATE AND IMPLEMENT A NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY PLAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY STRATEGY AS SOON AS THE PRESIDENT DECLARES THE EXISTENCE OF THE STATE OF PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY.

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SECTION 3. *Section 8 of Republic Act No. 11332 is hereby amended to read as follows:*

"Section 8. Establishment of Epidemiology and Surveillance Units. - The DOH [, in coordination with the LGUs,] shall ensure that the Epidemiology and Surveillance Units (ESUs) are established and functional in all levels of the DOH and its local counterparts, and in public and private health facilities and laboratories, as well as ports and airports in ah provinces, cities and municipalities throughout the country.

ALL PROVINCES, CITIES, AND MUNICIPALITIES SHALL ESTABLISH THEIR OWN EPIDEMIOLOGY AND SURVEILLANCE UNITS WHICH SHALL CLOSELY COORDINATE WITH THE ESUS OF THE DOH.

"The ESU shall capture and verify all reported notifiable diseases and health events of public health concern: provide timely, accurate, and reliable epidemiologic information to appropriate agencies: conduct disease surveillance and response activities: coordinate needed response: and facilitate capacity building in the field of epidemiology, disease surveillance and response at the Epidemiology Bureau.

All ESUs **OF THE DOH AND LGUS** shall have trained required human resource complement and provision of adequate resources, including equipment, logistics, communication, transportation, laboratory supplies and reagents, personal protective equipment and health insurance, to effectively perform their disease surveillance and response functions."

SECTION 4. *Section 9 of Republic Act No. 11332 is hereby amended to read as follows:*

"SEC. 9. Prohibited Acts. - The following shall be prohibited under this Act:
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"(F) CREATING, PERPETUATING, OR SPREADING FALSE INFORMATION REGARDING AN EPIDEMIC OR PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND OTHER PLATFORMS, SUCH INFORMATION HAVING NO VALID OR BENEFICIAL EFFECT ON THE POPULATION, AND ARE CLEARLY GEARED TO PROMOTE CHAOS, PANIC, ANARCHY, FEAR, OR CONFUSION; AND THOSE PARTICIPATING IN CYBER INCIDENTS THAT MAKE USE OR TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE CURRENT CRISIS SITUATION TO PREY ON THE PUBLIC THROUGH SCAMS, PHISHING, FRAUDULENT EMAILS, OR OTHER SIMILAR ACTS;

"(G) DISCRIMINATING AGAINST HEALTH WORKERS, INFECTED AND RECOVERED PERSONS SUCH AS PROMOTING AND ENCOURAGING STIGMA, INCITING VIOLENCE. SUBJECTING THEM TO PROFILING, DETENTION, OR VERBAL OR PHYSICAL HARASSMENT; AND

"(H) INTENTIONALLY DECLARING OR REPORTING FALSE INFORMATION ON INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

"xx."

SECTION 5. *Separability Cause.* - Any portion or provision of this Act that is declared unconstitutional shall not have the effect of nullifying other portions or provisions hereof as long as such remaining portions can still subsist and be given effect in their entirety.

SECTION 6. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, ordinances, rules, regulations, other issuances or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with this Act, are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 7. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,