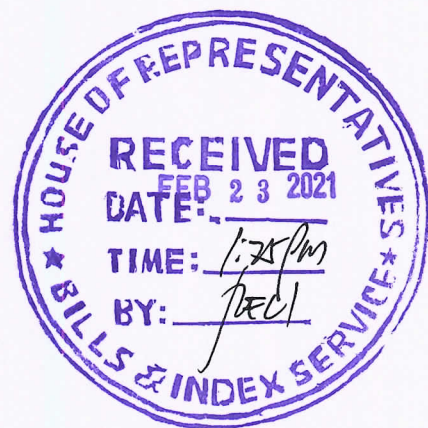


REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 8810



Introduced by **MAGDALO Party-List Representative**
HON. MANUEL DG. CABOCHAN III

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Diagnostic testing and immunization programs are some of the important components in defeating the COVID-19 pandemic. However, these components remain inaccessible for most Filipinos.

In November 2020, the government mandated a price cap for the COVID-19 real-time reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) tests in high hopes to make it more accessible to the public. These price caps were set from P4,500.00 to P5,000.00 for private hubs and P3,800.00 for public testing centers per RT-PCR swab test.¹ In spite of these price caps, many Filipinos still cannot afford them.

Meanwhile, as the government readies itself for the procurement of COVID-19 vaccines starting in the second quarter of 2021, their estimated prices remain exorbitant as well. For instance, the vaccine made by the pharmaceutical company

¹ Rappler. Gov't sets price cap for coronavirus RT-PCR tests. Information retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/nation/covid-19-rt-pcr-tests-price-range>. Dated November 25, 2020

Moderna will cost at around P3,904.00 to P4,504.00 for two doses per person. While the Pfizer-BioNTech's vaccine costs P2,379.00 for two doses per person.²

As the cure for the COVID-19 disease is now in sight, our pandemic battle is far from over as both the COVID-19 RT-PCR test and vaccines may remain inaccessible especially to those who belong in the grassroots level of society. This measure seeks to establish a free access to COVID-19 testing and vaccination programs nationwide. Every Filipino residing in the Philippines are entitled to a free COVID-19 RT-PCR diagnostic test and COVID-19 vaccine. It shall have a Comprehensive COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Plan to ensure the safe, efficient and effective administration of approved COVID-19 vaccines.

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



MANUEL DG. CABOCHAN III

Representative

Magdalo Para Sa Pilipino Party-List

² Inquirer. Explainer: Facts about 7 COVID-19 vaccines Philippines may get. Information retrieved from <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1372054/explainer-facts-about-7-covid-19-vaccines-philippines-may-get>. Dated December 15, 2020

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8810
House Bill No. _____

Introduced by **MAGDALO Party-List Representative**
HON. MANUEL DG. CABOCHAN III

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A FREE AND ACCESSIBLE COVID-19 TESTING AND
VACCINATION PROGRAM NATIONWIDE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR

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

1 SECTION 1. *Short Title.*— This Act shall be known as the "Free and Accessible
2 COVID-19 Testing and Vaccination Act of 2020".

3
4 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*— It is hereby the policy of the State to protect and
5 promote the right to health of the people. The State shall take a proactive role in the
6 preventive healthcare of all Filipinos by allocating funds and mandating our country's
7 healthcare system to offer diagnostic test and vaccines against the Coronavirus
8 disease (COVID-19). Towards this end, the State shall establish a free and accessible
9 COVID-19 testing and vaccination program nationwide to safeguard the health of the
10 nation.

1 Sec. 3. *Coverage.*— Every Filipino residing within the Philippine territory who
2 request to be tested shall be entitled to a free COVID-19 Reverse transcription-
3 polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) diagnostic test and free COVID-19 vaccine.
4

5 Sec. 4. *Free COVID-19 Testing Program.*— The Inter-Agency Task Force on
6 Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) shall create a program to make COVID-19
7 testing free and accessible for every Filipino residing within the Philippine territory. No
8 person shall be deprived a COVID-19 RT-PCR diagnostic test due to its cost. *Provided,*
9 That the said cost shall be assumed by the national government using the current
10 appropriations of the Department of Health.
11

12 Sec. 5. *Free COVID-19 Vaccination Program.*— The IATF-EID shall create a
13 program for the free, safe, efficient and timely distribution of COVID-19 vaccines to
14 every Filipino. All designated COVID-19 referral hospitals and tertiary public hospitals
15 shall offer approved COVID-19 vaccines by the Department of Health (DOH) for free
16 in accordance with the approved list of social groups and sectors to have priority
17 access to the COVID-19 vaccine.
18

19 It shall include a comprehensive plan which identifies the logistical needs for
20 the transport, storage and distribution of vaccines and the strategic, scientific and
21 ethical prioritization of the distribution of vaccines towards maximizing the impact of
22 the vaccines on its efforts to reduce the transmission of the disease.
23

24 Sec. 6. *Comprehensive COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Plan.*— The IATF-EID, in
25 coordination with infection disease experts and concerned public sector
26 representatives, shall prepare and submit a Comprehensive COVID-19 Vaccine
27 Distribution Plan that shall ensure the safe, efficient and effective administration of
28 approved COVID-19 vaccines. Policies that will ensure the efficient delivery of
29 vaccinations services to all Filipinos shall be a part of the plan, including but not limited
30 to the following:

- (a) The offering of free voluntary vaccination to all Filipinos following a system of priority targeting taking into consideration frontline and vulnerable sectors, as well as areas of high incidence of COVID-19 cases;
- (b) Ensuring that persons offered vaccination receive information regarding the risks and benefits of vaccination;
- (c) A system for documenting vaccine administration, medical contradictions, patient refusals and any post-vaccination adverse events;
- (d) Identification of implementing agencies, units, government officials and personnel; and
- (e) The DOH, with the assistance of local government units, academe, professional societies and non-governmental organizations, shall undertake continuing information, education and training programs for all health personnel on the rationale and benefits of as well as modern procedures for immunization against vaccine-preventable diseases.

The distribution plan shall also take into consideration the efficacy of the vaccine and the necessity to re-vaccinate as may be necessary.

Sec. 7. Education and Information Campaign.— All healthcare practitioners or healthcare workers who are administering COVID-19 vaccines shall educate all patients on the importance of receiving COVID-19 immunization services, as well as any possible effects of immunization. The DOH, as well as other government agencies, non-government organizations, professional and academic societies and local government units (LGUs) shall make available appropriate information materials and shall have a system of its distribution to the public.

The information campaign shall likewise state that all COVID-19 vaccinations are optional and that persons may avail of the vaccines from non-government accredited institutions.

Sec. 8. Informed Consent.— The COVID-19 vaccine shall be administered only upon informed consent of the person to be vaccinated. The persons administering the

vaccine is obliged to inform said persons of the following in relation to the COVID-19 vaccine to be administered:

- (a) Brand to be administered;
- (b) Nature of the vaccine;
- (c) Manner in which the vaccine is administered;
- (d) Persons to whom the vaccine is intended;
- (e) Persons to whom the vaccine is prohibited or not advised;
- (f) Side effects of the vaccine, if any;
- (g) Period of efficacy of the vaccine; and
- (h) Official DOH and IATF-EID website or social media pages where the information on the vaccine is available.

Parents or legal guardians shall provide the informed consent in cases of minors.

Sec. 9. Registration and Certification.— All recipients of the COVID-19 vaccination shall be issued a certification of COVID-19 immunization upon completion of the required doses and registered in a centralized government-managed database which shall be subject to the Data Privacy Act.

The production and use of a falsified certification under this Section shall be penalized under the Revised Penal Code, Title 1, Chapter 1, Section 4 on Falsification of Legislative, Public Commercial, and Private Documents, and Wireless, Telegraph and Telephone Messages.

Sec. 10. Implementing Rules and Regulations.— To ensure the safe delivery of the COVID-19 vaccines, the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases is directed to collaborate with the local government units. The Department of Health shall thereby formulate and promulgate the pertinent rules and regulations for the implementation of this Act within forty-five (45) days from the effectivity of this Act.

Sec. 11. Appropriations.— The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be charged against the existing realigned appropriations of the 2019,

2020 and 2021 General Appropriations Act for COVID-19 response. Private sector funding for the COVID-19 Testing Program and COVID-19 Vaccination Program shall be permitted. Private companies may avail of any tax incentives or credits present under current tax laws for their financing of the COVID-19 Testing Program and COVID-19 Vaccination Program.

Sec. 12. *Separability Clause.*— If any portion or provision of this Act is subsequently declared invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

Sec. 13. *Repealing Clause.*— All other laws, acts, presidential decrees, executive orders, presidential proclamations, issuances, rules and regulations, or parts thereof which are contrary to or inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

Sec. 14. *Effectivity Clause.*— This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,