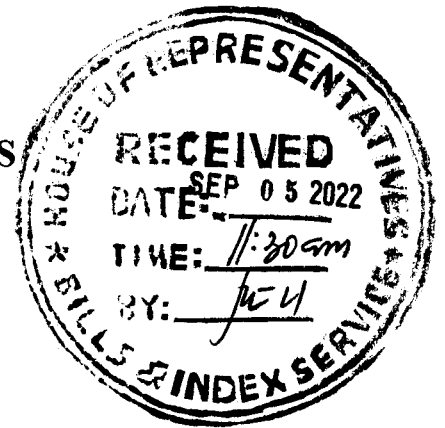


Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City

**NINETEENTH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 4401



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Introduced by **HON. MARIA FE R. ABUNDA**  
Representative, Lone District, Eastern Samar

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Republic Act 9439, entitled “An Act Prohibiting the Detention of Patients in Hospitals and Medical Clinics on Grounds of Nonpayment of Hospital Bills or Medical Expenses”, is a necessary and significant measure enacted in 2007. The said law makes it illegal for “any hospital or medical clinic in the country to detain or to otherwise cause, directly or indirectly, the detention of patients who have fully or partially recovered or have been adequately attended to or who may have died, for reasons of nonpayment in part or in full of hospital bills or medical expenses.”

Comprehensive and exacting as the law is, however, there have still been several news reports of medical institutions refusing to discharge patients and cadavers on the ground of non-payment. A cursory review of this problem seems to point to an existing information gap, such that patients and their families are not aware of the protection this law affords them.

Thus, this law seeks to mend that information gap by mandating hospitals and medical clinics to post notices of this law in places immediately available for everyone’s viewing. Further, this law seeks the Department of Health’s further assistance in bridging the aforesaid gap.

There are indeed efforts towards a more inclusive medical care system in the Philippines. However, even before such a system could be attained, we must now extend care towards families who tend to their sick or mourn over their departed. As the passage of this bill is one such way towards extending that care, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

**MARIA FE R. ABUNDA**  
Representative, Lone District, Eastern Samar

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**AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9439 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS “AN  
ACT PROHIBITING THE DETENTION OF PATIENTS IN HOSPITALS AND  
MEDICAL CLINICS ON GROUNDS OF NONPAYMENT OF HOSPITAL BILLS OR  
MEDICAL EXPENSES”**

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

**SECTION 1.** Section 4 of Republic Act No. 9439 is hereby amended to read as follows:

**“Sec. 4. ALL HOSPITALS AND MEDICAL CLINICS IN THE COUNTRY SHALL CAUSE THE POSTING IN THEIR LOBBY, BY THEIR FRONT DOOR, OR ON ANY OTHER SUCH IMMEDIATELY VISIBLE AND CONSPICUOUS LOCATION IN THEIR BUILDINGS A PRINT OUT OF THIS LAW IN A LIKEWISE VISIBLE AND CONSPICUOUS MANNER. SHOULD SUCH HOSPITAL OR MEDICAL CLINIC HAVE AN EMERGENCY ROOM, A SIMILAR POSTING SHALL ALSO BE POSTED BY THE FRONT DOOR OF SAID EMERGENCY ROOM.”**

**SECTION 2.** The sections of the Republic Act No. 9349 previously denominated as Sections 4, 5, 6, and 7 are hereby renumbered as Sections 5, 4, 6, and 7 respectively.

**SECTION 3.** The section of Republic Act No. 9439 previously denominated as Section 4, and hereby renumbered as Section 5 is hereby amended to read as follows:

**“SEC. 5. The Department of Health shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act AND SHALL LAUNCH AN INFORMATION CAMPAIGN REGARDING THE EXISTENCE OF THE SAME.”**

**SECTION 3. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,