



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

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. 5437



Introduced by HONORABLE ERNESTO “ERNIX” M. DIONISIO, JR.

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING MATERNAL AND INFANT HOME VISITING PROGRAMS AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSES

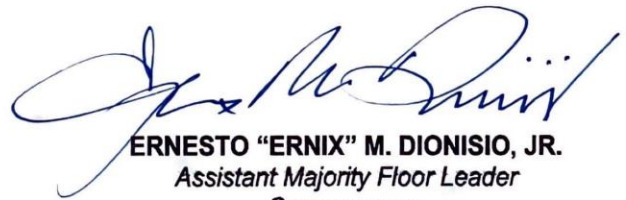
EXPLANATORY NOTE

The well-being of expectant mothers should always be a primordial concern of the State. Poverty should never hinder the development of the child inside the mother's womb.

Article XIII, Section 11 of the 1987 Constitution states: “The State shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall endeavor to make essential goods, health and other social services available to all the people at affordable cost. There shall be a priority for the needs of the underprivileged sick, elderly, disabled, women, and children. The State shall endeavor to provide free medical care to paupers.

In line with this, this bill seeks to introduce measures that will make prenatal care accessible to expectant mothers who do not have the resources to ensure that their offspring are born healthy.

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ernesto M. Dionisio, Jr.', with a stylized flourish at the end.

ERNESTO "ERNIX" M. DIONISIO, JR.

Assistant Majority Floor Leader

Congressman

First Congressional District of Manila



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

SECTION 1. Short Title. - This Act shall be known as the “Maternity Care Act.”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is the declared policy of the State to equally protect the life of the mother and the life of the unborn from conception. Towards this end, the State must ensure that measures are enacted providing accessible prenatal and postnatal maternity care services in the home of pregnant women in order to protect their health as well as the future health and wellbeing of their newborn children.

SECTION 3. Eligibility of Individuals. - A pregnant woman not more than twenty-one (21) years old, or families with an infant of up to the age of one (1), belonging to the low-income bracket shall be eligible to receive maternal and infant care services provided under this Act. Individuals must be identified by their respective barangays as belonging to the low-income bracket in order to be covered under this Act.

SECTION 4. Establishment of Maternal and Infant Health Home Visiting Program. - The Secretary shall require health centers to designate an appropriate health professional or qualified non-professional acting under the supervision of a health care professional who shall deliver maternal and child health services in the home of eligible individuals.

SECTION 5. Maternal and Child Health Services. – The maternal and child health services which may be provided in the home to eligible individuals shall include the following:

- a) instruction and counseling regarding future health care for the woman and her child;
- b) nutrition counseling;
- c) counseling and education concerning all aspects, of prenatal care, childbirth, and motherhood;
- d) general family counseling, including child and family development; and
- e) medical care or referral for medical care for the woman and her child.

SECTION 6. Prohibition. – It shall be unlawful for the health centers and their designated health professional or qualified non-professional acting under the supervision of a health care professional to refuse or fail to render maternal and child health services to eligible individuals.

SECTION 7. Penalty. – Any employee of the health center, the designated health professional or qualified non-professional acting under the supervision of a health care professional, who violates the provisions 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 month, but not more than six months, or both such fine and imprisonment, at the discretion of the proper court.

SECTION 8. Separability Clause. – If any provision or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remainder of this Act or any provisions not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.

SECTION 9. 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 10. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days from the date of its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,