



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

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. 5440



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

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF SUBSTANCE
ABUSE AMONG HIGH-RISK YOUTH

EXPLANATORY NOTE

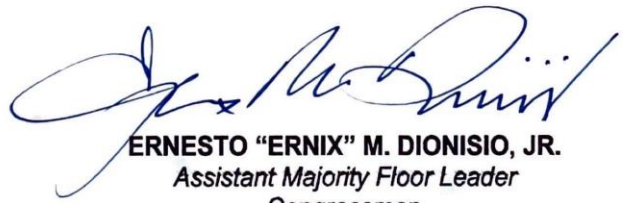
The 1987 Constitution provides that the State shall recognize the vital role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote and protect their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being. Clearly, it is the policy of the State to afford the youth of protection so that they would be able to reach their full potential and be responsible members of our society. However, many problems pervade our youth, particularly the issue of substance abuse.

The problem of substance abuse has long been an issue in our society. Most of the substance abusers develop the habit in their teens and have since continued until adulthood. In a study, it was found that substance abuse from teenagers results from experimental use where 1 in 2 begin such experimentation when they were between the ages of 15 and 19.¹

The prevalence of substance abuse among a sector of our youth is a problem that must be addressed lest the State fails its mandate. This proposed bill ensures that priority is given to the rehabilitation and protection of high-risk youths from substance abuse. The proposed bill also provides that the Department of Health shall have the authority to grant projects and measures that will help in the prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of substance abusers.

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

¹ <https://www.makatimed.net.ph/blogs/the-scary-facts-about-teenage-drug-abuse/#:~:text=%E2%80%8BMost%20drug%20users%20develop,into%20the%20habit%20for%20so me.>

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. Title. — This Act shall be known as the "Saving Young Substance Abusers Act."

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. — The State recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social wellbeing. Towards this end,

SECTION 3. Definition of "High-Risk Youth". — For purposes of this Act, the term "high-risk youth" means an individual who has not attained the age of 18 years, who is at high risk of becoming, or who has become, a substance abuser, and who —

- a) Is identified as a child of a substance abuser;
- b) Is a victim of physical, sexual, or psychological abuse;
- c) Does not attend school;
- d) Has become pregnant;
- e) Is economically disadvantaged;
- f) Has committed a violent or delinquent act;
- g) Has experienced mental health problems;
- h) Has attempted suicide;
- i) Has experienced long-term physical pain due to injury;
- j) Has experienced chronic failure in school;
- k) Is from a broken family;
- l) Is a child laborer;
- m) Is a street child or street gang member, or
- n) Lives in conflict areas.

SECTION 4. Grants to Public and Nonprofit Private Entities. — The DOH shall make grants to public and nonprofit private entities for projects to demonstrate effective models for the prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of substance abuse among high-risk youth.

SECTION. 5. Priority of Projects. —

- a) In making grants for substance abuse prevention projects, the DOH shall give priority to applications for projects directed at children of substance abusers, children at risk of abuse or neglect, preschool children, children at risk of dropping out of school, children at risk of becoming adolescent parents, children who do not attend school, child laborers, street children, and children who are at risk of being unemployed.
- b) In making grants for substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation projects, the DOH shall give priority to projects which address the relationship between substance abuse and physical child abuse, sexual child abuse, emotional child abuse, dropping out of school, unemployment, delinquency, pregnancy, violence, suicide or mental health problems.
- c) In making grants under this Act, the Secretary shall give priority to applications from community-based organizations for projects:
 - (I) To develop innovative models with multiple coordinated services for the prevention or for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug abuse or alcohol abuse by high-risk youth.
 - (II) To demonstrate effective models with multiple coordinated services which may be replicated and which are for the prevention or for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug abuse or alcohol abuse by high-risk youth.
 - (III) That employ research designs adequate for evaluating the effectiveness of the program.

SECTION 6. Strategies for Reducing Abuse of Substances. — The DOH shall ensure that projects under Section 4 include strategies for reducing the use of alcoholic beverages and tobacco products by individuals to whom it is unlawful to sell or distribute such beverages or products.

SECTION 7. Equal Distribution of Grants. — To the extent feasible, the DOH shall ensure the equal distribution of grants under this Act among urban and rural areas.

SECTION 8. Application for Grants. — In order to receive a grant for a project under this Act for a fiscal year, a public or nonprofit private entity shall apply to the DOH. The Department may provide the provincial governor or the city mayor the opportunity to review and comment on such applications. Such application shall be in such form, shall contain such information, and shall be submitted at such time as the Secretary may by regulation prescribe.

SECTION 9. Separability Clause. — If any provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the Act or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 10. Repealing Clause. — Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SECTION 11. 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,