

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. 9583



Introduced by Representative CAMILLE A. VILLAR

**AN ACT
TO ESTABLISH A GRANT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE VISION CARE TO
CHILDREN**

Explanatory Note

The overall well-being, educational development, and productivity of children are greatly affected by their poor vision. Nevertheless, if detected and addressed at an early age, many visual impairments can be treated, and further complications can be prevented.

In the Philippines, however, the lack of funding for such programs serves as a barrier in accessing adequate vision care.

This bill seeks to establish program to award grants to Local Government Units on the basis of an established review process for the purpose of complementing existing government efforts. It will complement current state efforts by granting funds for comprehensive eye examinations, treatments, and services making it more accessible to Filipino children.

Through this bill, more educational materials on eye care can also be disseminated to the public thereby promoting vision care to children.

As such, the approval of this measure is urgently sought.

Camille A. Villar
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Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Vision Care for Kids Act.*”

Sec. 2. *Definition of Terms.* – The following terms as used in this Act shall be defined as follows:

(a) “*Comprehensive Eye Examination*” includes an assessment of a patient’s history, general medical observation, external and ophthalmoscopic examination, visual acuity, ocular alignment and motility, refraction, and as appropriate, binocular vision or gross visual fields, performed by an optometrist or an ophthalmologist.

(b) “*LGU*” refers to a local government unit, which may be a province, city or a municipality.

(c) “*Secretary*” refers to the Secretary of Health.

Sec. 3. *Grant Regarding Vision Care for Children.* – The Secretary shall carry out this grant program to award grants to LGUs on the basis of an established review process for the purpose of complementing existing government efforts for:

- (a) Providing comprehensive eye examinations by a licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist for children who have been previously identified through a vision screening or eye examination by a licensed health care provider or vision screener as needing such services, with priority given to children who are under 8 years old;
- (b) Providing treatment or services, subsequent to the examinations described in the aforementioned paragraph, necessary to correct vision problems; and
- (c) Developing and disseminating to parents, teachers, and health care practitioners' educational materials on recognizing signs of visual impairment in children; *Provided that* the LGU shall not expend more than 20 percent of the amount received under the grant to carry out the purpose described in this paragraph.

Sec. 4. *Criteria and Coordination.* – The Secretary, in consultation with appropriate professional and consumer organizations including individuals with knowledge of age-appropriate vision services, shall develop criteria governing the operation of the grant program under Section 3, and for the collection of data related to vision assessment and the utilization of follow up services.

Sec. 5. *Application.* – To be eligible to receive a grant under Section 3, an LGU shall submit to the Secretary an application in such form, made in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require, including the following:

- (a) Information on existing children vision programs;
- (b) A plan for the use of grant funds, including how funds will be used to complement existing State efforts (including possible partnerships with non-profit entities);
- (c) A plan to determine if a grant eligible child has been identified as provided for in Section 3; and
- (d) A description of how funds will be used to provide items or services only as a secondary payer to any local government compensation program, under an insurance policy, or under any government health benefits program.

Sec. 6. *Evaluations.* – To be eligible to receive a grant under Section 3, an LGU shall agree that not later than one (1) year after the date on which amounts under the grant are first received by it, and annually thereafter while receiving amounts under the grant, the LGU shall submit to the Secretary an evaluation of the operations and activities carried out under the grant, including-

- (a) An assessment of the utilization of vision services and the status of children receiving those services as a result of the activities carried out under the grant;
- (b) The collection, analysis, and reporting of children's vision data according to guidelines prescribed by the Secretary; and
- (c) Such other information as the Secretary may require.

Sec. 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Department of Health (DOH), in consultation with Department of the Interior and Local Government shall formulate the rules and regulations necessary to implement the provisions of this Act within six (6) months from its effectivity.

Sec. 8. *Appropriations.* – Such sums as may be necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be taken from the current appropriations of the DOH. Thereafter, the fund necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Sec. 9. *Separability Clause.* – If any portion or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remainder of this Act or any provisions hereof not affected thereby shall continue to be in force and effect.

Sec. 10. *Repealing Clause.* –Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, rule or regulation inconsistent or contrary to the provision of this Act is hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Sec. 11. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,