

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9853



Introduced by REP. EMILIO BERNARDINO L. YULO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Department of Health (DOH) has identified renal or kidney diseases as one of the top ten causes of mortality in the Philippines. In fact, millions of Filipinos have suffered renal disorders over the years. According to the Philippine Renal Disease Registry, the prevalence of end-stage chronic kidney disease has increased over time in the country, and the number of patients beginning dialysis is expected to rise by an estimated 10% each year.

Renal failure can be just as life-threatening and disabling as other silent killer diseases. Significant problems, such as cardiovascular disease, infections, and anemia, are possible and can raise mortality risks. Many Filipinos, especially those who are impoverished or live in remote areas, may find it difficult and expensive to receive care for kidney disease.

Erythropoietin is a hormone that stimulates red blood cell production in the body. Erythropoietin levels can be low in dialysis patients with kidney failure, which causes anemia. As a result, it is frequently used to treat anemia in dialysis patients with kidney failure. Epoetin treatment can lessen the signs and symptoms of anemia and improve the patient's wellbeing by promoting the generation of red blood cells.

However, due to factors including cost and availability, access to Epoetin treatment and other necessary medications for kidney failure may be constrained in the Philippines. Patients with kidney failure who require dialysis and Epoetin injections may have difficulty affording them, especially if they are not covered by health insurance or government assistance programs.

Patients in rural or remote places may face challenges accessing dialysis centers and specialized medical care, which could hinder their ability to get Epoetin and other critical treatments.

This measure intends to provide free Epoetin medication through an epoetin injection for dialysis treatment of indigent patients in the Philippines. The Epoetin medication stimulates the production of red blood cells in patients with kidney failure who undergo dialysis.

It is critical to give priority to the supply of inexpensive and accessible treatments for people suffering from renal failure, such as Epoetin, to improve the outcomes and quality of life for patients undergoing dialysis.

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



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**AN ACT PROVIDING FOR FREE EPOETIN INJECTION FOR DIALYSIS
TREATMENT OF INDIGENT PATIENTS IN THE PHILIPPINES, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES**

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* This act shall be known as the "Free Epoetin Treatment Act of 2023".

SEC. 2. *Declaration of State Policy.* It is hereby declared the policy of the State to provide affordable and accessible health care to all Filipinos, particularly those who are indigent and in need of life-saving treatment such as dialysis. To this end, this act aims to provide free Epoetin Injection for dialysis treatment of indigent patients in the Philippines.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* The following terms as used in this Act shall mean:

(a) *Dialysis* - a medical procedure performed when the kidneys cannot filter waste from the blood;

(b) *Epoetin* - an artificial form of Erythropoietin, a hormone that increases red blood cell production in the body;

(c) *Epoetin Injection* - a synthetic version of human erythropoietin produced naturally in the body, primarily by the kidneys;

(d) *Indigent Patient* - a person who has no visible means of income, or whose income is insufficient for family subsistence, as identified by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) or any other government agency duly authorized to make such determination, based on specific criteria.

SEC. 4. *Provision of Free Epoetin Treatment.* All indigent patients undergoing dialysis treatment shall be entitled to free Epoetin treatment, including the cost of the medicine, equipment, and supplies necessary for the administration of the treatment. Indigent patients with kidney failure and are undergoing dialysis shall be given free Epoetin treatment in government hospitals and clinics identified by the Department of Health (DOH).

SEC. 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* The DOH, in coordination with Philippine Health Insurance Corporation and other industries concerned, shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act within a period of ninety (90) days after its effectivity.

SEC. 6. *Appropriations.* The amount necessary to effectively carry out the provisions of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the concerned government agencies. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 7. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, rules and regulations or parts thereof which are in conflict or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 8. *Separability Clause.* In the event that any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the validity of the other provisions shall not be affected by such declaration.

SEC. 9. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,