

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 388



Introduced by **Representative FERDINAND L. HERNANDEZ**

AN ACT
GRANTING FREE MAINTENANCE MEDICINES TO SENIOR CITIZENS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Under Article XIII, Section 11 of the Constitution, the State is mandated to adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development, giving priority to the needs of the elderly, and most vulnerable sectors of our society. In line with this, the proposed bill seeks to uphold the welfare of Filipino senior citizens by ensuring access to essential maintenance medicines.

The risk of developing hypertension, diabetes, and other types of chronic illnesses which require long-term or maintenance medications to prevent complications, increases together with age. Sadly, however, many of our seniors who are living on pensions or limited income can no longer sustain their living expenses and medications during their twilight years.

Even with the passage of the “Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010” (R.A. No. 9994) which provides for discounts and VAT Exemptions on medicines, the financial burden on senior citizens remains significant, especially for those without family support or health insurance.

Hence, this proposed measure aims to establish a national program that will provide free maintenance medicines to qualified senior citizens diagnosed with a range of illnesses associated with aging and prevalence. The institutionalization of the Free Maintenance Medicines Act will ensure a better quality of life for our elders not only because of humanitarian reasons but more so as a recognition of their invaluable contributions to our nation especially during their most productive years.

I sincerely enjoin our colleagues for the immediate approval of this measure.


FERDINAND L. HERNANDEZ

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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 “Free Maintenance Medicines for Senior Citizens Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – Consonant with Article XIII, Section 11 of the Constitution which provides that the State shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health and other social services available to all people at affordable cost, giving priority to the underprivileged, sick, elderly, disabled, women and children, it is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and promote the health and well-being of elderly citizens for their continued meaningful contribution and participation in the society. This Act seeks to provide free maintenance medications for our senior citizens, thereby enhancing their quality of life and health outcomes.

SEC. 3. *Free Maintenance Medicine.* – The government, through the Department of Health and Department of the Interior and Local Government, shall provide free maintenance medicine to qualified senior citizens. The DOH shall identify a list of maintenance medicines for senior citizens and shall be supplied to all our barangay health centers, super health centers, and rural health units. The DILG must prepare the list of senior citizen beneficiaries who are qualified to avail of these free maintenance medicines, which they have to turn over to the DOH.

SEC. 4. *Qualified Beneficiaries.* – To qualify for the Free Maintenance Medicines, a senior citizen must meet the following criteria:

- (a) Be a Filipino citizen and a registered senior citizen as defined in Republic Act No. 9994;
- (b) Submit an application to the Department of Health (DOH) or its designated agency, accompanied by a valid prescription for maintenance medications issued by application; and
- (c) Once approved, beneficiaries shall be issued a Free Maintenance Medicine Card.

SEC. 5. *Implementation and Coordination.* – The Department of Health (DOH) shall be responsible for the implementation of this Act and shall coordinate with other relevant agencies, including the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and National Commission of Senior Citizens (NCSC) to ensure the efficient distribution of Free Maintenance Medicine.

SEC. 6. *Monitoring and Evaluation.* – The DOH shall establish a monitoring system to track the utilization of the Free Maintenance Medicine for Senior Citizens Act. The DOH shall submit an annual report to Congress detailing the program's effectiveness and impact on senior citizens' health and well-being.

SEC. 7. *Penalties.* – Any person who commits fraud, misrepresentation, or any form of abuse in the application or use of the Free Maintenance Medicine for Senior Citizens shall be subject to penalties as prescribed by law.

SEC. 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The DOH, in coordination with the DILG, NCSC, and other relevant agencies, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to effectively implement this Act within ninety (90) days from its effectivity.

SEC. 9. *Separability Clause.* – If any part, section, or provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 10. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 11. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,