

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1794



Introduced by **REP. JAVIER MIGUEL L. BENITEZ**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Congenital Heart Disease ("CHD") is one of the most common types of birth defects, affecting an estimated 9 out of every 1,000 newborns globally,¹ including thousands of Filipino children each year. It is a lifelong condition that may result in significant physical limitations, frequent hospitalizations, and long-term medical management, including surgeries and medications.

Despite these serious health challenges, individuals with CHD are not currently afforded the full protection and support extended to Persons with Disabilities ("PWDs") under existing laws, rules and regulations such as Republic Act ("R.A.") No. 7277 (1992) or the "Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities."² As a result, many patients and their families bear the full brunt of medical and socio-economic burdens, with limited access to government assistance, discounts on health services, or employment support.

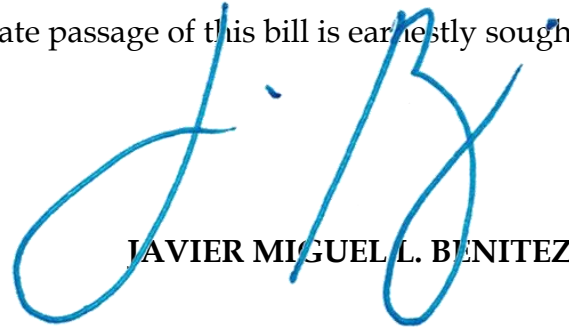
The proposed inclusion of CHD aims to close a policy gap by formally recognizing CHD as a condition that qualifies for the benefits and protections accorded to the PWDs. It ensures that all individuals diagnosed with CHD, regardless of age, are entitled to the same privileges granted to PWDs, including, but not limited to, discounts on medicines, diagnostic and therapeutic procedures, assistive devices, public transportation fares, and access to educational and employment support programs.

¹ Johnson, J. (2024). Congenital Heart Defects in Children. *Mayo Clinic*. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/congenital-heart-defects-children/symptoms-causes/syc-20350074>

² Republic Act No. 7277 The Magna Carta for Disabled Persons (1992)

Through this measure, the State upholds its duty to protect and promote the right to health and social welfare of all citizens, with particular attention to the most vulnerable. It seeks to promote greater inclusivity, compassion, and social justice for individuals with CHD and their families.

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of stylized, overlapping loops and strokes, positioned above the printed name.

JAVIER MIGUEL L. BENITEZ

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Introduced by **REP. JAVIER MIGUEL L. BENITEZ**

**AN ACT MANDATING THAT PATIENTS WITH CONGENITAL HEART
DISEASE BE GIVEN THE SAME PRIVILEGES AS PERSONS WITH
DISABILITIES (PWDs), AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

SECTION 1. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is the declared policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people, instill health awareness among them, to make available essential goods, health, and other social services to all citizens at affordable cost and to deliver medical care to indigents free of charge.

SEC. 2. *Disability Benefits to Persons with Congenital Heart Disease* - Persons with Congenital Heart Disease ("CHD") shall be entitled to the same benefits granted to Persons With Disability ("PWDs") such as, but not limited to:

- (a) At least twenty percent (20%) discount and exemption from the value-added tax ("VAT"), if applicable, on the following sale of goods and services for the exclusive use and enjoyment or availment of the PWDs:
 - (1) On the fees and charges relative to the utilization of all services in hotels and similar lodging establishments; restaurants and recreation centers;
 - (2) On admission fees charged by theaters, cinema houses, concert halls, circuses, carnivals and other similar places of culture, leisure and amusement;
 - (3) On the purchase of medicines in all drugstores;

- (4) On medical and dental services including diagnostic and laboratory fees such as, but not limited to, x-rays, computerized tomography scans and blood tests, and professional fees of attending doctors in all government facilities, subject to the guidelines to be issued by the Department of Health ("DOH"), in coordination with the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation ("PhilHealth");
 - (5) On medical and dental services including diagnostic and laboratory services, and professional fees of attending doctors in all private hospitals and medical facilities, in accordance with the rules and regulations to be issued by the DOH, in coordination with the PhilHealth;
 - (6) On fare for domestic air and sea travel;
 - (7) On actual fare for land transportation travel such as, but not limited to, public utility buses or jeepneys ("PUBs/PUJs"), taxis, Asian utility vehicles ("AUVs"), shuttle services and public railways, including Light Rail Transit ("LRT"), Metro Rail Transit ("MRT") and Philippine National Railways ("PNR"); and
 - (8) On funeral and burial services for the death of the PWD: Provided, That the beneficiary or any person who shall shoulder the funeral and burial expenses of the deceased PWD shall claim the discount under this rule for the deceased PWD upon presentation of the death certificate. Such expenses shall cover the purchase of casket or urn, embalming, hospital morgue, transport of the body to intended burial site in the place of origin but shall exclude obituary publication and the cost of the memorial lot.
- (b) Educational assistance to PWD, for them to pursue primary, secondary, tertiary, post tertiary, as well as vocational or technical education, in both public and private schools, through the provision of scholarships, grants, financial aids, subsidies and other incentives to qualified PWD, including support for books, learning materials, and uniform allowance to the extent feasible: Provided, That PWD shall meet the minimum admission requirements;
 - (c) To the extent practicable and feasible, the continuance of the same benefits and privileges given by the Government Service Insurance System ("GSIS"), Social Security System ("SSS"), and Pag-IBIG, as the case may be, as are enjoyed by those in actual service;
 - (d) To the extent possible, the government may grant special discounts in special programs for PWD on purchase of basic commodities, subject to

the guidelines to be issued for the purpose by the Department of Trade and Industry ("DTI") and the Department of Agriculture ("DA"); and

- (e) Provision of express lanes for PWD in all commercial and government establishments; in the absence thereof, priority shall be given to them.

The abovementioned privileges are available only to PWD including patients with CHD who are Filipino citizens upon submission of any of the following as proof of their entitlement thereto:

- (a) An identification card issued by the city or municipal mayor or the barangay captain of the place where the PWD resides;
- (b) The passport of the PWD concerned; or
- (c) Transportation discount fare Identification Card ("ID") issued by the National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons ("NCWDP").

The privileges may not be claimed if the PWD claims a higher discount as may be granted by the commercial establishment and/or under other existing laws or in combination with other discount program/s.

The establishments may claim the discounts granted in subsection (a), paragraphs (1), (2), (3), (5), (6), (7), and (8) as tax deductions based on the net cost of the goods sold or services rendered: Provided, however, That the cost of the discount shall be allowed as deduction from the gross income for the same taxable year that the discount is granted: Provided, further, That the total amount of the claimed tax deduction net of value-added tax, if applicable, shall be included in their gross sales receipts for tax purposes and shall be subject to proper documentation and to the provisions of the National Internal Revenue Code ("NIRC"), as amended.

SEC. 3. *Implementing Rules and Regulations* - The Department of Social Welfare and Development, in consultation with the Department of Health, Philippines Society of Pediatric Cardiology, the Department of Finance, and the National Council on Disability Affairs, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of the provisions of this Act: Provided, That the failure of the concerned agencies to promulgate the said rules and regulations shall not prevent the implementation of this Act upon its effectivity.

SEC. 4. *Repealing Clause* - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules, and regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 5. *Separability Clause* - If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder shall not be affected thereby.

SEC. 6. *Effectivity* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,