

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

**TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session**

HOUSE BILL NO. 1954



Introduced by Representative CIRIACO B. GATO, JR. MD. FPSO-HNS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This proposed legislative act recognizes the urgent need to prioritize and improve the health and well-being of Filipino mothers during childbirth through a comprehensive maternal healthcare approach that includes immunization for pregnant women. It seeks to expand HB 5684 filed in the 19th Congress by Rep. Camille Villar by integrating Maternal Influenza and TDAP (Tetanus Toxoid, Diphtheria Toxoid, and Acellular Pertussis) vaccinations into maternal healthcare to safeguard the well-being of expectant mothers and their newborns.

The most recent data on maternal health underscores the importance of addressing the existing challenges. Despite notable progress in various healthcare indicators, maternal mortality remains a significant concern. In 2021, PSA data recorded 2,478 maternal deaths in the Philippines—equivalent to 189 deaths per 100,000 live births, or roughly 6–7 women lost every day. While this declined to 2,008 deaths in 2022, maternal mortality remains alarmingly high, underscoring rural underreporting and region-based health disparities.

According to the PSA report, at least 2,478 women died of maternal causes in that year. That is six to seven Filipino women dying of childbirth everyday in the country. The actual figure may be higher, especially in rural areas, where cases of maternal death remain unreported.

The harrowing data reflects the persistent gaps in access to quality maternal healthcare services and the imperative to implement effective measures.

By mandating maternal immunization across private and public healthcare institutions, this proposed legislation aims to mitigate the risk of preventable diseases that can have severe consequences for both mothers and infants. Vaccinations have proven to be one of the most successful and cost-effective public health interventions. Ensuring comprehensive immunization

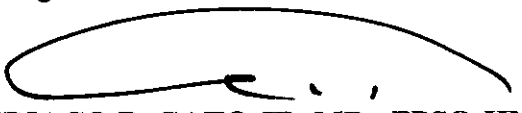
In addition to immunization, this proposed legislation puts emphasis on the importance of accessible and comprehensive maternal healthcare services. Disparities in access to healthcare persist, particularly among vulnerable populations and in certain regions. This legislation seeks to address these disparities by establishing maternal health centers and support programs that cater to the unique needs of pregnant women. These efforts align with the Sustainable Development Goals and global strategies for reducing maternal mortality and improving maternal health.

Furthermore, this proposed legislation recognizes the significance of raising awareness and promoting education about maternal health. Informed decision-making and early intervention are pivotal in preventing complications and ensuring positive outcomes for both mothers and babies.

By focusing on immunization, improving access to maternal healthcare, and promoting awareness, we aspire to significantly reduce maternal mortality rates, enhance the health of expectant mothers, and contribute to the overall betterment of maternal and child health in the country.

The reintroduction of this bill in the 20th Congress is an urgent call to renew commitment and accelerate action towards comprehensive maternal care, incorporating vaccination as a pivotal preventive measure. The continued delay in passing this legislation threatens to prolong the loss of countless Filipino mothers and their children, underscoring the imperative for swift legislative action.

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



CIRIACO B. GATO, JR. MD., FPSO-HNS

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**AN ACT PROVIDING COMPREHENSIVE MATERNAL HEALTHCARE INCLUDING
IMMUNIZATION FOR PREGNANT WOMEN**

Section 1. Short title – This Act shall be known as the “Comprehensive Maternal Healthcare and Immunization Act.”

Section 2. Consistent with the State policy that the State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them and the constitutional declaration that the State shall enhance the welfare and safety of Filipino women, it is hereby declared the policy of the State to ensure the health and well-being of pregnant Filipino women by providing comprehensive maternal healthcare services, including immunization, to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates, promote healthy pregnancies, and contribute to the overall well-being of families and communities.

Section 3. National Immunization Program for Pregnant Women - There is hereby established a National Immunization Program under the Department of Health (DOH), which shall ensure that pregnant Filipino women and newborns are sufficiently protected from vaccine-preventable diseases such as Influenza, Whooping cough (pertussis), tetanus, and diphtheria.

Section 4. Coverage - The immunization provided under this Act shall cover the following vaccine-preventable diseases:

- a) Influenza;
- b) Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Whooping cough (Pertussis); and
- c) Such other vaccines as determined by the DOH in line with evidence-based guidelines and global health recommendations and best practices in maternal and fetal health.

Section 5. Administration of Vaccines - The vaccines shall be administered for free in any government hospital or health facility, and in communities under its community-based immunization program, and in any private health facility if such is included in the PhilHealth benefit package. The DOH, in collaboration with the Department Interior and Local Government, shall conduct community-based immunization programs for pregnant women.

The DOH shall periodically review and update the list of immunizations for pregnant women in line with evidence-based medical guidelines and global health recommendations.

Section 6. Education and Awareness - All health care practitioners or healthcare workers who are administering prenatal care shall educate pregnant mothers on the importance of immunization in safeguarding maternal and infant health and well-being, as well as the potential risks and side effects.

Section 7. Access to maternal healthcare – The DOH, in coordination with local government units (LGUs), shall ensure the availability of comprehensive maternal healthcare services, including but not limited to prenatal care including vaccinations, nutrition support, prenatal screening, counselling, and postnatal care, to all pregnant women.

Section 8. The LGUs in cooperation with the DOH are mandated to upgrade and improve devolved health services and medical facilities to ensure that they are adequately equipped to provide comprehensive maternal healthcare services, including quality emergency obstetric care (EMOC). Every barangay in the country should have a birthing facility to help reduce the risk of maternal and infant deaths.

Section 9. The LGUs shall encourage facility-based delivery and shall ensure the availability and retention of health workers who deliver these health services.

Section 10. Reporting and Monitoring – The DOH shall submit to the Office of the President of the Philippines, the Senate Committee on Health and Demography, and the House of Representatives Committee on Health on or before the end of December of every year, or upon the request of any of these said committees of Congress, a report giving a detailed account of the status of the implementation of this Act.

Health centers and other healthcare facilities shall maintain accurate records of maternal healthcare services provided, including the number of immunizations, prenatal check-ups, deliveries, postpartum visits, and referrals made.

Section 11. Appropriations. -The amount necessary to carry out the implementation of this Act shall be charged to the current year's appropriations of the DOH. Thereafter, such funds as may be necessary for the effective implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Section 12. Implementing Rules and Regulations - The DOH shall, in consultation with the National Immunization Committee, issue the implementing rules and regulations within ninety (90) days after the approval of this Act.

Section 13. Separability Clause - If for any reason, any part or provision of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

Section 14. Effectivity Clause -This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,