



Republic of the Philippines  
**House of Representatives**  
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session

**HOUSE BILL No. 2041**



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Introduced by: **HON. CARL NICOLAS C. CARI**

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### EXPLANATORY NOTE

Snakes, spiders, scorpions, and various marine animals, including jellyfish and stonefish, are among the numerous venomous species that inhabit the Philippines. Although these organisms are a critical component of the nation's ecosystems, they present substantial health hazards, particularly to residents of rural, coastal, and remote regions where medical infrastructure is frequently inadequate. A variety of symptoms, such as paralysis, tissue necrosis, and organ failure, can result from venomous wounds and stings, ranging from mild irritation to life-threatening situations.

Despite the severe and immediate threat presented by these venomous species, numerous healthcare facilities nationwide, particularly in rural and underserved areas, lack the requisite supply of antivenom vaccines. This shortage is a critical gap in the healthcare system that frequently leads to preventable deaths and enduring disabilities. The administration of life-saving antivenom treatments is commonly delayed as a result of the extensive travel required by victims of venomous wounds and stings to reach specialized medical centers. This delay can be fatal for a significant number of individuals. The absence of readily accessible antivenom vaccines has a disproportionate impact on vulnerable populations, including farmers, fishers, children, and indigenous communities, who are more likely to encounter venomous animals in their daily activities.

By requiring all hospitals and healthcare facilities in the Philippines, whether public or private, to maintain a sufficient and easily accessible stock of antivenom vaccines, the proposed legislation, referred to as the "Venom Bill," aims to resolve this public health concern. This measure mandates that healthcare institutions guarantee the availability of antivenom for the most prevalent venomous species in their geographic region, including cobra and sea snake antivenom in rural or coastal areas. By implementing this measure, the disparity between the timely provision of appropriate medical care and life-threatening encounters with venomous creatures is intended to be bridged.

The bill will also promote collaboration among local healthcare providers, government agencies, and international organizations to guarantee that healthcare professionals are well-versed in the appropriate administration and use of antivenom treatments. Furthermore, the Department of Health (DOH) shall be responsible for supervising the bill's implementation, which will encompass establishing guidelines for stocking, distributing, and using antivenom and monitoring compliance across healthcare institutions.

The government will not only reduce the long-term healthcare costs associated with venom-induced injuries but also save lives by enacting the Venom Bill. Given the aforementioned, it is with the utmost urgency that the immediate passage of this measure be pursued to guarantee that no Filipino lives are lost as a result of the absence of accessible, life-saving antivenom treatment.

This measure was previously filed in the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress by the undersigned and was referred to the House Committee on Health on 11-04-2024.

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

**CARL NICOLAS C. CARI**  
*Representative*  
Fifth District of Leyte



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**AN ACT MANDATING THE AVAILABILITY OF ANTIVENOM VACCINES IN ALL HOSPITALS, PROVIDING GUIDELINES FOR STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

*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 “Antivenom Bill.”

**SECTION 2.** *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them. In line with this, it shall be a priority of the government to ensure that antivenom vaccines are readily available in all healthcare facilities to address the dangers posed by venomous species.

**SECTION 3.** *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

- a. Antivenom – a biological product used to treat venomous bites or stings by neutralizing the venom.
- b. Hospitals – any healthcare facility, public or private, that provides medical and surgical treatment.
- c. Venomous Species – refers to animals that inject venom, including but not limited to snakes, spiders, and marine animals.

**SECTION 4.** *Mandatory Availability of Antivenom Vaccines.*

- a. All public and private hospitals shall maintain a stock of antivenom vaccines sufficient to treat venomous bites and stings common to the region where the hospital is located.
- b. The Department of Health (DOH) shall establish a list of antivenom vaccines required based on the venomous species prevalent in each region.

**SECTION 5.** *Guidelines for Storage and Distribution.*

- a. Hospitals shall ensure proper storage of antivenom vaccines in accordance with DOH guidelines to maintain their effectiveness.
- b. Antivenom vaccines shall be readily accessible in emergency rooms and other relevant departments for immediate use during emergencies.
- c. The DOH shall develop and implement a distribution system to ensure the equitable distribution of antivenom vaccines and ensure priority in rural and remote areas where access to larger medical centers may be limited.

**SECTION 6.** *Training and Capacity Building.*

- a. The DOH, in partnership with relevant medical institutions, shall conduct regular training for healthcare professionals on the proper administration of antivenom vaccines and the management of venomous bites and stings.



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- b. Hospitals shall designate personnel responsible for the storage, handling, and administration of antivenom vaccines.

**SECTION 7. *Funding.***

- a. The initial funding for the procurement, storage, and distribution of antivenom vaccines shall be sourced from the current appropriations of the DOH.
- b. Subsequent funding shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

**SECTION 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DOH, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, shall issue the necessary rules and regulations to implement this Act effectively.

**SECTION 9. *Penalties.*** – Failure of hospitals to comply with the provisions of this Act shall result in the imposition of fines and administrative penalties as determined by the DOH.

**SECTION 10. *Separability Clause.*** – If any part or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

**SECTION 11. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

**SECTION 12. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

**APPROVED,**