

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2503



Introduced by: REP. RAMIL L. HERNANDEZ

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING A CANCER MEDICINE AND TREATMENT ASSISTANCE FUND
FOR INDIGENT AND UNDERPRIVILEGED FILIPINOS**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Cancer, known as one of the leading causes of death in the Philippines, imposes immense emotional, physical, and financial burdens on individuals and their families. Recognizing the urgency of addressing this catastrophic disease, the State has adopted a comprehensive approach to health development, leading to the enactment of the National Integrated Cancer Control Act (NICCA).

The NICCA, signed into law on 14 February 2019, is a pivotal measure aimed at ensuring the provision of high-quality health services and financial risk protection for cancer patients. Its Implementing Rules and Regulations, issued by the Department of Health on 23 August 2019, further delineate the framework for its effective implementation.

One of the significant provisions of the NICCA is Section 20, which establishes the Cancer Assistance Fund. Although the specific amount is not specified, the provision designates the Department of Health (DOH) as the responsible entity for managing the Fund. Another notable provision, Section 32, outlines that the budget allocation for the National Integrated Cancer Control Program in the DOH budget will be based on a strategic plan formulated by the Council in coordination with other stakeholders.

While the 2023 DOH Budget Briefer reveals an allocation of PhP 2.10 billion for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases, including cancer, it is imperative to acknowledge the disproportion between the budget allocation and the gravity of the issue. The Department of Health, with a combined budget of 322.17 billion pesos, has allocated significantly less to cancer control and rehabilitation programs.

In light of this inadequacy, this bill aims to address the urgent need for increased

funding by proposing an allocation of ten billion pesos exclusively for the Cancer Assistance Fund. This significant investment will provide critical support for cancer patients, ensuring accessible and quality cancer medicine, treatment, and care throughout the country.

By passing this legislation and augmenting the Cancer Assistance Fund, we demonstrate our unwavering commitment to combatting cancer and alleviating the burdens faced by countless Filipino individuals and families affected by this devastating disease.

Approved,



RAMIL L. HERNANDEZ
2nd District, Laguna

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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 "Cancer Medicine and Treatment Fund for Filipinos."

Section 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is a policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people. Towards this end, it is further declared a policy of the State to adopt and implement a system of effecting the delivery of free medicine and free treatment to indigent and underprivileged cancer patients.

Section 3. *Establishment of a Php 10 Billion Cancer Fund and Free Medicine Assistance Program.* There is hereby created a Ten Billion Cancer Fund that can be availed by indigent and underprivileged cancer patients. For the purpose, a Cancer Treatment Program, hereinafter referred to as the "Program," is established and to be administered by the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (Philhealth) through its accredited government hospitals in each particular congressional district, to be known as the health district.

The program shall be limited to indigent and underprivileged cancer patient beneficiaries to be identified by the Philhealth in close coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG).

The Philhealth, jointly with the DSWD, DOH and DILG and the relevant private groups including the association of hospitals and medical institutions and groups of patients, shall prescribe such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provision of this Act within six (6) months from the effectivity hereof.

Section 4. *Appropriations.* - There is hereby appropriated the sum of Ten Billion Pesos

(P10,000,000,000.00) for the implementation of the Program. The National Government shall subsequently include in the budget of the Department of Health in the General Appropriations Act such amount as may be necessary to carry out the objectives of this Act.

Section 5. *Separability Clause.* - In the event that any provision of this Act or any part thereof is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the provisions not hereby affected shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 6. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, orders, presidential decrees, executive orders, proclamations or administrative regulations that are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

Section 7. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,