

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. **3016**
Introduced by Representative **MARLYN L. PRIMICIAS-AGABAS**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

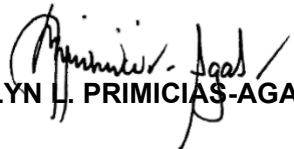
Liver diseases—including hepatitis, cirrhosis, and liver cancer—constitute a growing and pressing public health concern in the Philippines. According to the latest data from the World Health Organization (WHO) published in 2018, liver-related conditions accounted for 7,491 deaths in the country, representing 1.23% of total deaths. The age-adjusted death rate stands at 9.88 per 100,000 population, placing the Philippines at 128th globally in terms of liver disease mortality. These alarming figures highlight the urgent need for a dedicated national facility to address, manage, and reverse the trend of liver-related illnesses.

This proposed legislation seeks to establish the Liver Center of the Philippines, a specialized government institution that will provide comprehensive care for patients suffering from liver diseases. The Center will offer state-of-the-art diagnostic, treatment, and transplant services, conduct pioneering research, and serve as a training ground for medical and allied health professionals in hepatology and liver transplantation. Its creation is anchored in the State's constitutional duty to protect and promote the right to health, as enshrined in *Article II, Section 15* of the *1987 Philippine Constitution*. Moreover, it affirms the principles under *Article XIII, Section 11*, of the same *Constitution* which mandates the State to adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development, and to make essential goods and services accessible to all Filipinos at affordable cost.

The Liver Center will not only serve as a treatment facility but also as a national hub for innovation in liver disease management. It will establish scientific and professional standards for liver care and transplant services in the country, helping to harmonize and elevate the quality of healthcare nationwide. Furthermore, it will foster collaboration between government, medical institutions, and international partners to advance liver health research and capacity-building in the Philippines.

Considering the growing burden of liver diseases and the absence of a centralized national facility to address it, the establishment of the Liver Center of the Philippines is both timely and necessary. By consolidating liver-related healthcare services, research, and education under one institution, the government can better respond to this serious health challenge, improve patient outcomes, and reinforce the resilience of the national healthcare system.

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


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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE LIVER CENTER OF THE PHILIPPINES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. - This Act shall be known as the “Liver Center of the Philippines Act.”

SEC. 2. Establishment of the Liver Center of the Philippines. - There is hereby established a Liver Center of the Philippines, hereinafter referred to as the Liver Center, a government corporate facility that will offer comprehensive care of patients with liver disorders including liver transplant services, a strong teaching program and research capability to serve the Filipino people. The Liver Center shall be located in Metro Manila. The Liver Center shall have the attribute of perpetual succession and shall be vested with the powers of a corporation and shall continue to exist until dissolved for a lawful cause and/or by joint resolution of Congress.

SEC. 3. Purposes and Objectives. - The Liver Center shall have the following purposes and objectives:

- a. Establish and operate a liver rehabilitation, treatment or transplant center for the public welfare.
- b. Offer comprehensive care for patients with liver diseases.
- c. Conduct training and research on the prevention and treatment of blood liver diseases and those related to liver regeneration and transplant services including sponsorship and conduct of relevant congresses, conventions, seminars and conferences.
- d. Establish a state-of-the-art liver diseases laboratory including a molecular laboratory.
- e. Establish a Liver Stem Cell transplant program and donor registry.
- f. Recruit, retain and case for voluntary liver donors.
- g. Collect liver organs from qualified voluntary liver donors.

- h. Process whole liver into liver components.
- i. Collect liver components.
- j. Store, issue, transport and distribute whole liver to end-user hospitals and non-hospital health facilities.
- k. Ensure that safe supply of liver and liver products to all hospitals and other health facilities is adequate in terms of distribution and delivery.
- l. Implement and monitor quality assurance to selected regional liver centers.
- m. Test liver infections; and
- n. Provide special confirmatory tests and perform liver examinations.

SEC. 4. *Powers and Functions.* - The Liver Center shall have the following powers and functions:

- a. Adopt a code of by-laws to implement this Chapter.
- b. Adopt and use a corporate seal which shall be a matter of judicial notice.
- c. Determine its organizational structure and the number and salaries of its officers and employees in accordance with the provision of Republic Act No. 10149, otherwise known as the Government-Owned and Controlled- Corporation (GOCC) Governance Act of 2011.
- d. Establish and maintain professional and technical educational systems for the sustained development of the necessary manpower to manage and operate its affairs and business.
- e. Invest its funds as it may deem proper and necessary, but subject to applicable law, rules and regulations, in any activity related to the Center, including in any bonds or securities and guaranteed by the Government of the Philippines.
- f. Acquire assets, real or personal, interest therein and encumber or otherwise dispose of the same as it may deem proper and necessary in the conduct of its business.
- g. Borrow money from local or foreign sources as may be necessary for its operations, subject to applicable laws, rules and regulations.
- h. Accept any gifts, contributions, endowments, grants, bequests and devices of any kind of real or personal property which are necessary and proper for the attainment of the purpose of the hospitals; and
- i. Perform such acts and exercise such functions as may be necessary and proper for the attainment of the purposes and objectives herein specified.

SEC. 5. *Board of Trustee.* - The affairs and business of the Liver Center shall be directed; its properties managed; and its corporate powers exercised, unless otherwise provided in this Act, by its own Board of Trustees which shall be composed of seven (7) members, as follows:

- a. The Secretary of the Department of Health as Chairman of the Board or his duly authorized representative.
- b. The Undersecretary/Assistance Secretary of the Department of Health.
- c. One (1) member from the private sector preferably with experience in finance, administration or management.
- d. One representative who will provide expertise in liver diseases.
- e. One representative who will provide expertise in liver transplant.
- f. One representative from non-government organization; and
- g. The Liver Center Executive Director.

The term of office, manner of appointment of the trustees and other matters pertaining to the governance of the Liver Center shall be determined in accordance with the pertinent provisions of R.A. No. 10149.

The Board of Trustees shall be governed by a set of by-laws, which shall contain, among others, an enumeration of each of the members' responsibilities, accountabilities, and cause of termination.

SEC. 6. *Powers and Functions of the Board.* - The Board of Trustees which shall be the policy-making body of the Liver Center shall have the following powers and functions:

- a. Determine the general policies of the Liver Center within the scope of its powers, objectives and financial resources.
- b. Establish the organizational structure of the Liver Center, define the duties and responsibilities of all officials and employees and adopt a compensation and benefit scheme, subject to the pertinent provisions of Republic Act No. 10149.
- c. Acquire, hold and own in any manner, property of whatever nature or description, and to dispose of such property under mode of encumbrance or conveyance.
- d. Enter, make, perform and carry out contracts of every kind and for any lawful purpose with any person, firm, association or corporation, whether public or private, domestic or foreign.
- e. Mortgage, lease, sell, transfer, convey or otherwise dispose of its properties.
- f. Solicit and receive donations, endowments and funds in the form of contributions, whether in cash or in kind, from both public and private sectors and from domestic or foreign sources.
- g. Open such accounts in banks and other financial institutions, and to disburse such funds or invest the same as the Board of Trustees may direct to accomplish or advance the purposes or interest of the Liver Center.

- h. Invite foreign or local health specialists and similar experts in the various medical fields to train the personnel, trainees, fellows or residents of the Liver Center.
- i. Send the personnel of the Liver Center to research institutes, medical institutes or universities for advance training or observation and to attend international or regional conventions, conferences, congresses or seminars as the Board of Trustees may deem necessary to accomplish the purposes and objectives of the Liver Center.
- j. Enter into such agreements and arrangements with other medical or similar institutions, domestic or foreign, as may be deemed desirable by the Board of Trustees toward promoting the purposes and objectives of the Liver Center.
- k. Adopt set of by-laws, rules, regulations, policies, guidelines and procedures consistent with law and provisions hereof to govern the administration and operation of the hospital; and

Do all such other acts and things as are or may be necessary for or incidental to the accomplishment of the purposes and objectives of the Liver Center.

SEC. 7. *Duties and Responsibilities of the Executive Director.* - The Liver Center shall be headed by the Executive Director who shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

- a. Prepare the agenda for the meetings of the board, and submit for consideration of the board such policies and measures as he/she believes(s) necessary to carry out the purposes and objectives of this Act;
- b. Execute, administer and implement the policies and measures approved by the board.
- c. Exercise such other powers and perform such other duties provided in the bylaws and as vested to him by the board.

SEC. 8. *Program for Indigents.* - The Department of Health shall ensure that the Liver Center shall adopt and enforce a program for indigents needing liver/liver products and patients with liver diseases in accordance with the implementing guidelines on classification of patients on availment of Medical Social Services in Government Hospitals.

SEC. 9. *Retention of Income.* - The Liver Center is hereby authorized to retain and utilize their income derived from its operation and non-patient related activities for the maintenance of the other operating expenditures, including capital outlay especially in the acquisition of equipment and supplies, subject to auditing rules and regulations. Further, no amount from such income shall be used to augment the salaries and other compensation of the Liver Center personnel beyond the amounts determined by the

Governance Commission for Government-Owned and Controlled Corporations (GOCC), as provide for in RA No. 10149.

The Department of Health (DOH), in coordination with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), shall issue the necessary rules and regulations to implement this provision.

SEC. 10. *Exemption from Taxes.* - The Liver Center shall be exempt from the payment of taxes on all contribution thereto and all accruals on its income and investment earnings.

Any donation, contribution, bequest, subsidy or financial aid which may be made to it shall constitute allowable deduction from the income of the donor for the income tax purposes and shall be exempt from donor's tax subject to such conditions as provided in the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended.

The Liver Center shall be exempt from all other taxes, whether direct or indirect on its income, properties and operations.

SEC. 11. *Contracts.* - The Liver Center shall have the authority to enter into contracts with any person or entity, domestic or foreign and with government for the undertaking of the varied aspects of the Liver Center, including the acquisition, by way of purchase, lease, rent or other deferred payment arrangements of equipment and/or raw materials and supplies, as well as for services connected therewith under such terms and, conditions as it may deem proper and reasonable.

In the acquisition and disposal of property real or personal, a bidding process shall be necessary to conform to the requirements of public bidding as provided for in Republic Act No. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act and related laws.

SEC. 12. *Supervision.* - The Liver Center shall be under the direct supervision of the Department of Health for purposes of policy direction and control. It shall submit an annual report, pursuant to the pertinent provisions of R.A. No. 10149.

SEC. 13. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within thirty (30) days from the completion of the appointment of its members, the Corporation's Board of Trustees shall convene to formulate the rules and regulations necessary for the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 14. *Appropriations.* - The amount of Two Hundred Million Pesos (Php 200,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated for the initial operation and maintenance of the Liver Center shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 15. *Separability Clause.* - If, for any reason, any section or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other sections or provisions hereof which are not affected shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SEC. 16. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed.

SEC. 17. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.