



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 4127



Introduced by Representative Nelson S. Legacion
Third Congressional District, Camarines Sur

Rabies continues to pose a grave public health crisis in the Philippines, tragically claiming lives despite the comprehensive framework provided by Republic Act No. 9482, otherwise known as the "*Anti-Rabies Act of 2007*."

While the Department of Health (DOH) recently reported a drop in human rabies cases, with 55 cases from January to March 2025, a 39% decrease from 90 cases in the same period in 2024, the overall trend remains alarming as human rabies cases significantly increased by 81.28 percent, rising from 235 in 2020 to 426 in 2024. This escalating trend reveals a critical lack of accessible, life-saving post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for all Filipinos.

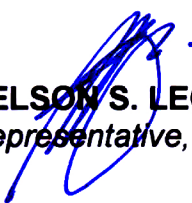
Currently, Animal Bite Treatment Centers (ABTCs) are limited and unevenly distributed. Victims, especially from indigent or remote areas, face costly travel and treatment delays, which dramatically increase fatal infection risk.

Thus, establishing fully functional ABTCs in all national and local government hospitals is paramount. Hospitals provide existing infrastructure and resources for integrated, immediate care, supporting the national goal of eliminating human rabies deaths by 2030 through universal access.

This measure seeks to mandate ABTC establishment and maintenance in all public hospitals, ensure adequate staffing and supplies, and provide sustainable funding. Its immediate enactment is crucial to reinforce RA 9482, guarantee equitable treatment access, and achieve a rabies-free Philippines.

This proposed measure aligns with and expands upon legislative efforts undertaken during the 19th Congress, including those initiated by Representative Emilio Bernardino L. Yulo, whose version notably proposed implementation on a per congressional district basis.

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



NELSON S. LEGACION
Representative, Third District, Camarines Sur



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**AN ACT REQUIRING ALL NATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
HOSPITALS TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN ANIMAL BITE TREATMENT
CENTERS (ABTCs), PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES**

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. This Act shall be known as the "*Universal Access
to Rabies Treatment Act.*"

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. It is hereby declared the policy of the State to uphold the constitutional right to health of its people and to foster public health consciousness. Recognizing rabies as a significant public health threat leading to preventable fatalities, the State shall ensure the widespread availability, accessibility, and affordability of life-saving medical interventions, particularly post-exposure prophylaxis for animal bites and other exposures. This Act aims to strengthen the implementation of Republic Act No. 9482, the "Anti-Rabies Act of 2007," by establishing a robust and accessible network of Animal Bite Treatment Centers nationwide.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms. For the purpose of this Act:

- (a) "Animal Bite Treatment Center" (ABTC) - refers to a specialized health facility or clinic established within a hospital equipped to provide comprehensive post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) services against rabies, including wound care, administration of anti-rabies vaccines (ARV), and rabies immunoglobulin (RIG), as well as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), all in strict accordance with the prevailing guidelines of the Department of Health (DOH).

- (b) "National Government Hospital" - refer to all hospitals that are owned, operated, and primarily funded by the National Government through the Department of Health (DOH) or other national government agencies.
- (c) "Local Government Hospitals" - refer to all hospitals that are owned, operated, and primarily funded by Provincial, City, or Municipal Governments.

SECTION 4. *Establishment and Maintenance of Animal Bite Treatment Centers.* All existing and newly established national and local government hospitals in the Philippines are hereby mandated to establish, operate, and continuously maintain a fully functional Animal Bite Treatment Center (ABTC) within their premises.

SECTION 5. *Facilities, Personnel, and Supplies.* Each ABTC shall be ensured to be:

- (a) Staffed with adequate medical and allied health personnel, including licensed physicians and registered nurses, who are appropriately trained and certified in animal bite management and rabies prophylaxis protocols as prescribed by the Department of Health.
- (b) Equipped with all necessary medical supplies, equipment, and cold chain facilities essential for the proper storage and safe administration of anti-rabies vaccines (ARV) and rabies immunoglobulin (RIG); and
- (c) Maintained to provide a safe, clean, and conducive environment for all patients.

SECTION 6. *Services to be Provided.* Each ABTC shall provide, but shall not be limited to, the following essential services:

- (a) Immediate and proper wound washing and disinfection;
- (b) Thorough and accurate risk assessment for rabies exposure, adhering strictly to DOH guidelines;
- (c) Timely administration of anti-rabies vaccines (ARV) and rabies immunoglobulin (RIG) as clinically indicated for post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP);
- (d) Administration of anti-tetanus prophylaxis;
- (e) Comprehensive counseling on rabies prevention, responsible pet ownership, and emphasizing the critical importance of completing the full course of treatment;
- (f) Referral for surgical and other specialized medical interventions, if deemed necessary; and

- (g) Accurate, complete, and timely recording and reporting of all animal bite cases to the proper health authorities for surveillance, epidemiological purposes, and national program monitoring.

SECTION 7. *Funding.* The initial funding required for the establishment and operationalization of ABTCs in national government hospitals shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA) under the budget of the Department of Health (DOH).

For local government hospitals, the necessary funds for establishment and initial operation shall be primarily sourced from the annual budget of the respective local government units. The National Government, through the GAA, shall provide augmentation to local government units for this purpose, if deemed necessary by the DOH, giving priority to LGUs with high rabies incidence or limited fiscal capacity. Subsequent maintenance and operational costs shall be incorporated into the regular budgets of the respective hospitals and their controlling government units.

SECTION 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).* Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Health, in consultation with the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Department of Agriculture (DA), the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), and other relevant stakeholders, shall jointly promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act, including the detailed roles and responsibilities of the Department of Health, Local Government Units, and other relevant government agencies.

SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.* If any provision or part of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the validity of the other provisions shall not be affected by such declaration and shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 11. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,