

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

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **4236**



Introduced by **Representative RAYMOND ADRIAN SALCEDA**

AN ACT
ENSURING THE CONTINUOUS AVAILABILITY OF ESSENTIAL MEDICINES,
VACCINES, AND SUPPLIES FOR NOTIFIABLE INFECTIOUS DISEASES OF
PUBLIC HEALTH IMPORTANCE IN ALL RURAL HEALTH UNITS (RHUs),
PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

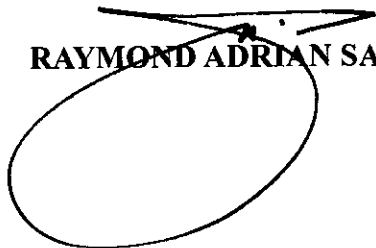
The Philippines continues to face recurrent outbreaks of infectious diseases that pose grave risks to public health and safety. Rabies remains almost universally fatal once symptoms appear, claiming hundreds of lives each year despite being entirely preventable through timely post-exposure prophylaxis. Leptospirosis cases surge after typhoons and flooding, particularly in low-lying communities, with mortality rates reaching as high as ten percent in severe outbreaks. Dengue epidemics occur annually, straining health systems and causing thousands of hospitalizations. Measles outbreaks, despite the availability of safe vaccines, have re-emerged in recent years due to lapses in immunization coverage.

The common thread across these diseases is the urgent need for continuous access to essential medicines, vaccines, and supplies at the primary level of care. Rural Health Units (RHUs), as the frontline facilities of the country's health system, are often the first and only point of access for patients in municipalities and far-flung barangays. Yet reports of stockouts — of rabies vaccines, anti-rabies immunoglobulin, doxycycline for leptospirosis, rehydration fluids for cholera and dengue, and routine vaccines for children — are widespread and persistent. These shortages delay treatment, increase mortality, and erode public trust in the health system.

This bill seeks to institutionalize the mandatory and uninterrupted availability of essential medicines, vaccines, and supplies for notifiable infectious diseases of public health importance in all RHUs. By empowering the Department of Health to maintain and regularly update a priority list, and by requiring both national funding and local government augmentation, the measure provides a sustainable mechanism to prevent stockouts.

Moreover, the bill ensures that outbreaks are met not with scarcity but with preparedness. It aligns with the Universal Health Care Act's mandate of comprehensive primary care and the constitutional duty of the State to protect the right to health of all Filipinos.

In light of the urgent public health risks posed by these diseases, and the need to strengthen the capacity of RHUs to respond swiftly and effectively, the immediate passage of this measure is earnestly sought.



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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 “Essential Infectious Diseases Medicines Availability Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is hereby declared the policy of the State to guarantee universal and equitable access to lifesaving medicines, vaccines, and supplies for the prevention, treatment, and control of notifiable infectious diseases of public health importance, including but not limited to rabies, leptospirosis, dengue, tuberculosis, influenza, measles, and cholera.

SEC. 3. *Mandatory Stocking of Essential Medicines.* All Rural Health Units (RHUs) and other primary care facilities operated by local government units (LGUs) shall maintain sufficient stocks of essential medicines, vaccines, and medical supplies as identified by the Department of Health (DOH) in its official list of notifiable infectious diseases.

SEC. 4. *Role of the Department of Health.* The DOH shall:

- (a) Maintain and regularly update the official list of priority infectious diseases and their corresponding essential medicines, vaccines, and supplies;
- (b) Ensure the timely procurement and distribution of such items to all RHUs;
- (c) Develop and implement an electronic monitoring system for RHU inventory to prevent shortages; and

- (d) Provide continuous training for RHU staff on the storage, handling, and administration of medicines and vaccines.

SEC. 5. *Responsibilities of Local Government Units.* Local government units shall:

- (a) Monitor compliance of RHUs within their jurisdiction;
- (b) Allocate counterpart funding to ensure adequate stocks;
- (c) Coordinate with the DOH on replenishment and reporting; and
- (d) Submit quarterly inventory and utilization reports to the DOH.

SEC. 6. *Funding.* The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the budget of the DOH. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA).

SEC. 7. *Augmentation from Local Sources.* Local government units may utilize a portion of their Special Health Fund under the Universal Health Care Act and other available health funds to augment the supply and distribution of essential medicines.

SEC. 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DOH, in consultation with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), and the League of Municipalities of the Philippines (LMP), shall promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations.

SEC. 9. *Separability Clause.* If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remaining provisions shall remain valid and in full force.

SEC. 10. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, orders, or regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 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,