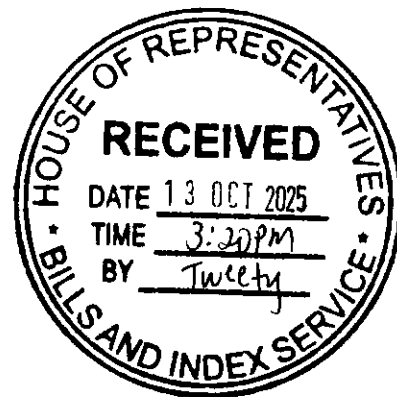




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 5534



Introduced by **Representative KATRINA REIKO CHUA - TAI**
1st District, Zamboanga City

AN ACT
AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10606, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE “NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE ACT OF 2013”, TO INCLUDE THE PROVISION OF SENSORY, ASSISTIVE, AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES AND DEVICES FOR INDIGENT SENIOR CITIZENS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (PWDs), AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Republic Act No. 10606, the National Health Insurance Act of 2013, affirms the State’s responsibility to ensure all Filipinos have access to quality, affordable healthcare. This obligation is especially important for indigent senior citizens and persons with disabilities. These groups often face additional challenges such as poverty, limited mobility, and social exclusion.

However, the current National Health Insurance Program (NHIP) benefit packages do not cover many essential supports, including devices and services such as hearing aids, wheelchairs, prosthetic limbs, orthotic braces, visual aids, and rehabilitative therapies, which remain unaffordable for many indigent seniors and persons with disabilities. This support is essential as it will restore mobility, communication, and independence. In addition, it will enable them to participate fully in daily life once more.

Without these NHIP supports, rehabilitation and reintegration are stymied. Functional decline accelerates, daily tasks become insurmountable, dignity is eroded, and dependence, isolation, and desperation increase. The absence of these essential services denies many the opportunity to live full, dignified, and productive members of our society.

Recent government data show that over 4 million indigent senior citizens receive support through the Social Pension program. More than 2 million Filipinos are registered as persons with disabilities. The actual number may be higher due to under-registration. Without access to assistive and rehabilitative services, many face declining health, loss of mobility, and exclusion from education, employment, and community life.

This bill proposes to amend Republic Act No. 10606. It will require PhilHealth to include sensory, assistive, and rehabilitative services and devices in the National Health Insurance Package's benefits for indigent senior citizens and persons with disabilities. This measure addresses a significant gap in our healthcare system. It ensures that those most in need receive the most appropriate support.

Institutionalizing this care does more than extend health services. It restores dignity and honor to the contributions and sacrifices of our elders and empowers every person with disabilities. It advances universal, quality, and inclusive healthcare for all Filipinos.

IN VIEW OF THE FOREGOING, immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KRC', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

KATRINA REIKO CHUA - TAI



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1 **AN ACT**
2 **AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10606, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE “NATIONAL**
3 **HEALTH INSURANCE ACT OF 2013”, TO INCLUDE THE PROVISION OF SENSORY,**
4 **ASSISTIVE, AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES AND DEVICES FOR INDIGENT**
5 **SENIOR CITIZENS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (PWDs), AND**
6 **APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

9 **SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** - This Act shall be known as the “NHIP Sensory, Assistive, and
10 Rehabilitation for Indigent Senior Citizens and PWDs Act”.

11 **SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** - It is the policy of the State to protect and promote
12 the right to health of the people and to ensure that health services are accessible and responsive,
13 especially to vulnerable sectors such as indigent senior citizens and persons with disabilities
14 (PWDs). The State shall ensure their inclusion in national health programs, particularly in access
15 to sensory, assistive, and rehabilitative services and devices essential to their quality of life and
16 social participation.

17 **SECTION 3. *Amendment.*** — Section 7 of the same Act amending Section 10 of
18 Republic Act No. 7875 otherwise known as the “National Health Insurance Act of 1995” is
19 hereby amended to read as follows:

20 SEC. 10. Benefit Package. -

21 Xxx

22 (e) **SENSORY, ASSISTIVE, AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES**
23 **AND DEVICES FOR INDIGENT SENIOR CITIZENS AND**
24 **PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (PWDS), INCLUDING BUT**
25 **NOT LIMITED TO HEARING AIDS, WHEELCHAIRS,**
26 **PROSTHETICS, ORTHOPEDIC BRACES, VISUAL AIDS (E.G.,**
27 **PRESCRIPTION GLASSES AND MAGNIFIERS), SPEECH AND**
28 **LANGUAGE THERAPY, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY, AND**
29 **PHYSICAL THERAPY, SUBJECT TO GUIDELINES SET BY**
30 **THE CORPORATION.**

1 “These services shall and packages shall be reviewed annually IN
2 CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
3 (DOH), TJE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY AFFAIRS
4 (NCDA), THE NATIONAL COMMISSION OF SENIOR CITIZENS
5 (NCSC), AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS to determine their financial
6 sustainability and relevance to health innovations, with the end in view of
7 quality assurance, increased benefits and reduced out-of-pocket
8 expenditure.”

9 **SECTION 4. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** - Within ninety (90) days from the
10 effectivity of this Act, the PhilHealth, in coordination with the DOH, DSWD, NCDA, and
11 NCSC, shall formulate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of
12 this Act, including a system for accreditation of providers and coverage criteria for assistive
13 devices and rehabilitation services.

14 **SECTION 5. *Appropriations.*** - The amount necessary to implement the provisions of
15 this Act shall be charged against the National Health Insurance Fund. Thereafter, such sums as
16 may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual General
17 Appropriations Act (GAA).

18 **SECTION 6. *Separability Clause.*** - If any provision of this Act is declared
19 unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

20 **SECTION 7. *Repealing Clause.*** - All laws, decrees, executive orders, or regulations
21 inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

22 **SECTION 8. *Effectivity.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
23 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

24 *Approved,*