

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City



TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **6263**

Introduced by Abang Lingkod Party-list Representative
Manuel "Manman" O. Ko

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) remains a serious and growing public health concern in the Philippines. According to the National Kidney and Transplant Institute (NKTi), as of 2024 there were 64,845 Filipinos undergoing dialysis, a 22% increase from the 53,296 patients recorded the previous year. Media reports citing NKTi data further estimate that around 7 million Filipinos are suffering from CKD stage 3 and above, making the country one of the hardest hit in Asia.

For patients with end-stage renal disease (ESRD), dialysis is a life-sustaining treatment. Medical standards generally recommend three hemodialysis sessions per week, or about 156 sessions annually, to sustain patient survival and quality of life. However, under existing policies, the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) has historically covered only ninety (90) sessions per year at a fixed case rate of ₱2,500 per session. This shortfall forces patients and their families to pay out of pocket for the remaining sessions. Families often report expenses exceeding ₱300,000 annually, an amount that is catastrophic for many Filipino households and often leads to treatment discontinuation or premature death.

In 2023, PhilHealth issued Circular No. 2023-0009, expanding dialysis coverage to 156 sessions per year for patients with Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) Stage 5. While this policy is a significant step forward, it remains necessary to institutionalize the expansion through legislation to guarantee its sustainability, uniform implementation, and nationwide accessibility. Moreover, coverage must be progressively expanded to include patients at earlier stages of CKD to ensure timely intervention and improved health outcomes.

This proposed measure seeks to mandate PhilHealth to cover at least 156 dialysis sessions annually for all eligible members and their qualified dependents. More importantly, it provides that indigent patients, as determined through an efficient and

streamlined certification process, shall receive these sessions completely free of charge. By removing financial barriers to essential treatment, this bill upholds the State's constitutional duty to promote the right to health and ensures that no Filipino suffering from kidney failure is left untreated simply because of poverty.

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


Manuel "Manman" O. Ko

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AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING AND EXPANDING HEMODIALYSIS COVERAGE UNDER THE PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION (PHILHEALTH) TO AT LEAST ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-SIX (156) SESSIONS PER YEAR, AND ENSURING FREE-OF-CHARGE DIALYSIS TREATMENT FOR INDIGENT PATIENTS

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 "*Expanded Philhealth Hemodialysis Act*"

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to uphold the constitutional right of every Filipino to health. The State shall ensure that healthcare services, particularly life-saving treatments such as dialysis, are adequate, affordable, accessible, and equitable, giving priority to indigent patients and marginalized populations.

SECTION 3. Coverage. - This Act shall cover all PhilHealth members and their qualified dependents as defined under Section V, Rule I, Title III of the Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act No. 7875 "National Health Insurance Act of 2013", as amended by Republic Acts Nos. 9241 and 10606.

SECTION 4. Definition of Terms. - The following terms, as used in this Act, shall mean:

a.) *Hemodialysis* - A medical procedure to remove fluid and waste products from the blood and to correct electrolyte imbalances through the use of a machine and a dialyzer, also referred to as an "artificial kidney." Hemodialysis is used to treat both acute (temporary) and chronic (permanent) kidney failure.

b.) Indigent member – For purposes of this Act, an indigent member shall refer to the PhilHealth member:

(1) Whose combined family income does not exceed Php500,000 pesos annually or which does not exceed the Philippines' official poverty line threshold from the previous year as set by the Philippine Statistics Authority in consultation with the appropriate inter-agency technical committee, whichever is higher; or

(2) Whose income is insufficient for family subsistence, as identified by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), based on specific criteria. All indigents identified by the DSWD under the National Household Targeting System (NHTS) for Poverty Reduction and other such acceptable methods.

Qualified dependents of indigent members shall likewise be entitled to the benefits under this Act. In cases of ambiguity, interpretation of the definition of indigency shall be resolved in favor of the PhilHealth member.

SECTION 5. Expansion of the Dialysis Treatment Coverage. - PhilHealth shall expand its hemodialysis package from ninety (90) sessions annually to one hundred fifty-six (156) sessions annually, equivalent to the standard three (3) sessions per week, without reducing the case rate amount of two thousand five hundred pesos (₱2,500.00) per session or its future adjusted equivalent.

SECTION 6. Free Dialysis Treatment for Indigent members. - The full annual one hundred fifty-six (156) sessions shall be provided free of charge to all indigent members and their qualified dependents. No cash out or balance billing shall be imposed on indigent patients and qualified dependents availing of dialysis services under this Act.

SECTION 7. Application and Certification of Indigency. - Indigent members shall secure a Certificate of Indigency from PhilHealth, based on DSWD certification or other validated criteria. The certificate shall:

- a.) Be valid for one (1) calendar year;
- b.) Be renewable annually;
- c.) Automatically qualify the member and dependents for the benefits herein.

PhilHealth shall establish a streamlined, digital, and decentralized application system to reduce bureaucratic barriers for indigent patients.

SECTION 8. Appropriation. - The expanded dialysis coverage shall be funded from:

1. PhilHealth's reserve funds;

2. The Universal Health Care (UHC) budget allocation under the General Appropriations Act; and
3. Earmarked revenues from Republic Act No. 10351 (Sin Tax Reform Law) and other health-related levies.

SECTION 9. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) - Philhealth shall issue the necessary implementing rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act within ninety (90) days after its effectivity.

SECTION 10. Separability Clause. - If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall remain valid, and in full force and effect.

SECTION 11. Repealing Clause. - All laws, orders, decrees, rules and regulations and other parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified.

SECTION 12. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,