

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

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session



House Bill No. **6836**

**Introduced by AKBAYAN Representatives PERCIVAL V. CENDAÑA,
JOSE MANUEL TADEO “CHEL” I. DIOKNO, and DADAH KIRAM
ISMULA and Dinagat Islands Representative KAKA J. BAG-AO**

**AN ACT
INSTITUTING A NATIONAL HEALTH PROGRAM TO COMBAT
SYSTEMIC LUPUS ERYTHEMATOSUS (SLE) DISEASE,
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE), more commonly known as “Lupus”, is a chronic autoimmune disease where the immune system attacks the body's cells and tissue, resulting in inflammation and tissue damage in different parts of the body, most often affecting the heart, joints, skin, lungs, blood vessels, liver, kidneys, and nervous system. An article published by the University of the Philippines Manila Health Sciences Center estimates that in Asia alone, the prevalence of lupus is approximately 30 to 50 cases per 100,000 people¹. Thus, impeding the ability of thousands of Filipinos to live a medically sound life, free from daily financial, physical, and emotional difficulties.

Despite the current efforts from both the government and private institutions, a deficiency of public awareness on lupus and the lack of a direct action plan to address its effects on thousands of Filipinos persists. Additionally, a lack of a national information and monitoring system on lupus and its incidence remains to restrain public health institutions in tracking and providing a compassionate and dignified treatment for Filipinos living with lupus.

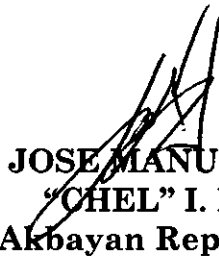
¹¹ Lingdas, C. A. (2024, June 21). *Expert Rheumatologist Advocates ‘SMILE Filipino Patients’ Project to Transform Lupus Care for Filipinos*. University of the Philippines Manila.
https://www.upm.edu.ph/cpt_news/expert-rheumatologist-advocates-smile-filipino-patients-project-to-transform-lupus-care-for-filipinos/

This ongoing practice must not remain to be present in Philippine society. Therefore, the proposed legislation seeks to establish a National Program for Lupus Prevention and Treatment that empowers pertinent government institutions to address the existing deficiency in support and assistance to Filipinos diagnosed with Lupus. Further, this measure aims to raise public awareness of SLE, and ensure that accessible treatment is provided to those who need it.

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



PERCIVAL V. CENDAÑA
Akbayan Representative



JOSE MANUEL TADEO
"CHEL" I. DIOKNO
Akbayan Representative



DADAH KIRAM ISMULA
Akbayan Representative



KAKA J. BAG-AO
Dinagat Islands Representative

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

1 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the "*Comprehensive*
2 *Lupus Prevention Act*".

3
4 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – It is the policy of the State to protect and
5 promote the right to health of the people. As such, the State shall implement a
6 comprehensive and nationwide health program and promote awareness on
7 Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE) to empower citizens suffering therefrom to
8 become, to the best of their potential, independent, self-reliant, and productive
9 members of society.

10
11 **SEC. 3. Definition of Terms.** – For the purpose of this Act, "Systemic Lupus
12 Erythematosus (SLE)" or "Lupus" shall be construed to mean a chronic
13 autoimmune disease where the immune system attacks the body's cells and tissue,
14 resulting in inflammation and tissue damage in different parts of the body, most
15 often affecting the heart, joints, skin, lungs, blood vessels, liver, kidneys, and
16 nervous system, as diagnosed by a competent medical practitioner.

1 **SEC. 4. *National Program for Lupus Prevention and Treatment.*** – The DOH
2 shall implement a comprehensive and nationwide program on Lupus prevention
3 and treatment with the following objectives:

4 a) to promote public awareness, education, and information on issues
5 concerning Lupus;

6 b) to promote and provide mechanisms for early identification, screening, and
7 diagnosis of persons suffering from Lupus;

8 c) to provide referral services to patients for appropriate educational and
9 medical expertise and to identify appropriate education or medical facilities suited
10 to the needs of patients;

11 d) to undertake research and collaborate with other institutions for the
12 conduct of research activities pertaining to the disease;

13 e) to provide an avenue for the sharing of best practices on issues relating to
14 early detection, prevention, cure, treatment, and rehabilitation of persons
15 diagnosed with Lupus;

16 f) to network with other organizations, institutions, and professionals
17 working on public programs for persons diagnosed with Lupus;

18 g) to promote an advocacy discouraging bias against and stereotyping of
19 afflicted persons; and

20 h) to establish a sustainable support network for families of persons
21 diagnosed with Lupus.

22
23 **SEC. 5. *Programs and Services for Lupus Management and Treatment.*** – The
24 DOH shall conduct, but not limited to, the following programs and services:

25 a) orientation and counseling services for families of newly-diagnosed
26 persons with Lupus;

27 b) establishment of national and regional referral services where the DOH
28 shall maintain an updated list of health care institutions and practitioners
29 concerned with the treatment of Lupus;

30 c) publish a newsletter on current developments and research on Lupus, as
31 well as other reading materials on the early detection, prevention, and treatment
32 of Lupus, and best practices for the care of diagnosed persons with Lupus; and

1 d) continuing education and training programs on the proper care of
2 diagnosed persons with Lupus, in collaboration with medical societies and hospital
3 associations.
4

5 **SEC. 6. *Information and Monitoring System on Lupus.*** – The DOH shall
6 establish and maintain an information and monitoring system on Lupus. It shall
7 monitor and require health facilities and healthcare professionals to submit
8 monthly reports on incidences of Lupus among their patients to enable the
9 government to formulate the corresponding policy, and implement strategies and
10 necessary health interventions, to address the needs faced by persons with Lupus.
11 The DOH shall coordinate with the Philippine Council for Health Research and
12 Development, the University of the Philippines – National Institutes of Health
13 (UP-NIH), and other relevant agencies and organizations, to develop the
14 information and monitoring system and to formulate policies to combat Lupus.
15

16 **SEC. 7. *Continuing Education and Training of Health Personnel and Service***
17 ***Providers on Lupus Management and Treatment.*** – All DOH staff and healthcare
18 providers providing health services to persons diagnosed with Lupus shall
19 undergo a mandatory continuing education and training program to ensure the
20 delivery of up-to-date and relevant services.
21

22 **SEC. 8. *Protection Against Forcible Administration of Medical Treatment or***
23 ***Enrollment in Programs.*** – All persons administering treatment, counseling, or
24 medication as well as all persons involved in the implementation of the DOH
25 programs as mandated in this Act shall respect the right of each patient to
26 determine for himself or herself the medical treatment to be administered as well
27 as the programs wherein he or she will participate, if any.
28

29 **SEC. 9. *PhilHealth Coverage on Early Detection and Screening Fees.*** – The
30 Philippine Health Insurance Corporation shall include the cost of early detection
31 and screening programs for Lupus as one of the available benefits to its members.

1 The early detection and screening fees shall be applied to, among others, testing
2 costs, education, follow-up, and reasonable overhead expenses.

3
4 **SEC. 10. *Donations and Grants.*** - The DOH, UP-NIH, and other national
5 government agencies concerned with the prevention, management, and treatment
6 of Lupus are hereby authorized to receive donations and grants from local and
7 international donor institutions, foundations, and foreign donor agencies:
8 *Provided, That,* pertinent laws and rules on the receipt, accounting, and
9 disbursement thereof shall be complied with.

10
11 **SEC. 11. *National Lupus Awareness Week.*** - In order to develop and expand
12 national interest and participation in the issues and concerns of Lupus patients,
13 the first week of May shall annually be celebrated as "Lupus Awareness Week."
14 This week-long activity will be spearheaded by the DOH, in coordination with
15 other concerned agencies, institutions, and stakeholders.

16
17 **SEC. 12. *Appropriations.*** - The amount necessary to carry out the provisions
18 of this Act shall be included in the annual general appropriations of the DOH.

19
20 **SEC. 13. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** - Within ninety (90) days from
21 the date of effectivity of this Act, the DOH shall promulgate the necessary
22 implementing rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

23
24 **SEC. 14. *Separability Clause.*** - If any provision or part of this Act is declared
25 unconstitutional or invalid, the remainder of this Act or any provision not affected
26 shall remain in full force and effect.

27
28 **SEC. 15. *Repealing Clause*** - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders,
29 issuances, and rules and regulations or parts thereof contrary or inconsistent with
30 provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

1 **SEC. 16. *Effectivity Clause.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after
2 its publication in the Official Gazette or two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

3
Approved,