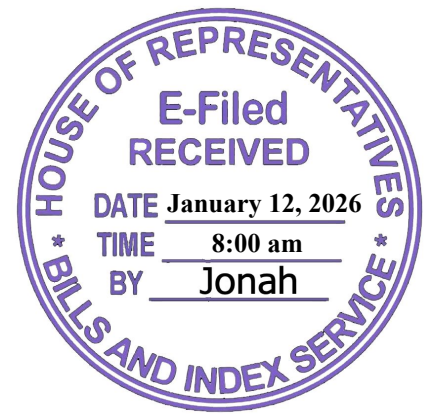


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City
20TH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 7070



Introduced by: **REP. JOEL R. CHUA**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE), commonly known as Lupus, is a chronic, lifelong autoimmune disease that often leads to severe complications involving the kidneys, heart, lungs, and central nervous system. In the Philippines, Lupus remains a largely under-recognized public health concern, marked by delayed diagnosis, limited access to specialists, high out-of-pocket costs, and the absence of a coordinated national program for prevention and treatment. As a result, many patients are diagnosed only after irreversible organ damage has occurred, placing a heavy burden on families and the public health system.

This bill seeks to address these gaps by instituting a comprehensive national health program for Lupus prevention and treatment, strengthening early detection, standardizing care, expanding PhilHealth benefits, improving data collection, and establishing a Center for Lupus and Autoimmune Diseases under the Department of Health.

By prioritizing awareness, early intervention, research, and sustained support for patients and their families, the measure aims to reduce preventable complications, health expenditures, and productivity losses, while upholding the State's constitutional duty to protect and promote the right to health.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this legislative measure is earnestly sought


JOEL R. CHUA

Representative, 3rd District, Manila

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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Introduced by: **REP. JOEL R. CHUA**

AN ACT INSTITUTING A NATIONAL HEALTH PROGRAM FOR LUPUS PREVENTION AND TREATMENT, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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 “Comprehensive Lupus Prevention Act of 2026”.

Section 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to safeguard and advance the people’s right to health. To this end, the State shall establish a comprehensive, nationwide health program and intensify public awareness on Systemic Lupus Erythematosus, with the aim of empowering those who are affected.

Section 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For the purpose of this Act, “Systemic Lupus Erythematosus” (SLE) or “Lupus” shall mean a chronic autoimmune disease where the immune system attacks the body’s cells and tissues, resulting in inflammation and tissue damage, most often affecting the heart, joints, skin, lungs, blood vessels, liver, kidneys, and nervous system, as diagnosed by a competent medical practitioner.

Section 4. *National Program for Lupus Prevention and Treatment.* – The Department of Health (DOH) shall implement a comprehensive and nationwide program on Lupus prevention and treatment to:

- (a) Promote public awareness, education, and information on issues concerning Lupus;
- (b) Promote and provide mechanisms for early identification, screening, and diagnosis of persons suffering from Lupus;

- (c) Provide referral services to patients for appropriate educational and medical expertise and to identify appropriate education or medical facilities suited to the needs of patients;
- (d) Undertake research and collaborate with other institutions in research activities pertaining to the disease;
- (e) Provide an avenue for sharing best practices on issues relating to early detection, prevention, cure, treatment, and rehabilitation of persons diagnosed with Lupus;
- (f) Network with other organizations, institutions, and professionals working on public programs for persons diagnosed with Lupus;
- (g) Promote an advocacy discouraging bias against and stereotyping of afflicted persons; and
- (h) Establish a sustainable support network for families of persons diagnosed with Lupus.

Section 5. *Programs and Services for Lupus Management and Treatment.*

– The DOH shall conduct the following programs and services, among others:

- (a) Orientation and counseling services for families of persons newly diagnosed with Lupus;
- (b) Establishment of national and regional referral services where the DOH shall maintain an updated list of health care institutions and practitioners concerned with the treatment of Lupus;
- (c) Publish a newsletter on current developments and research on Lupus, as well as other reading materials on its early detection, prevention, and treatment, and best practices for the care of persons diagnosed with Lupus; and
- (d) Continuing education and training programs on the proper care of persons diagnosed with Lupus, in collaboration with medical societies and hospital associations.

Section 6. *Center for Lupus and Autoimmune Diseases.* – There is hereby established a Center for Lupus and Autoimmune Diseases under the DOH to serve as the national technical and referral center for SLE and other autoimmune diseases,

with functions including standards development, research, training, data management, and policy support.

Section 7. *Information and Monitoring System on Lupus.* – The DOH shall establish and maintain an information and monitoring system on Lupus. It shall monitor and require health facilities and healthcare professionals to submit monthly reports on incidences of Lupus among their patients to enable the government to formulate corresponding policies, and implement strategies and necessary health interventions to address the needs of persons diagnosed with Lupus. The DOH shall coordinate

with the Philippine Council for Health Research and Development, the University of the Philippines – National Institutes of Health (UP-NIH), and other relevant agencies and organizations to develop the information and monitoring system and formulate policies to combat Lupus.

Section 8. *Continuing Education and Training of Health Personnel and Service Providers on Lupus Management and Treatment.* – All DOH staff and healthcare providers delivering health services to persons diagnosed with Lupus shall undergo a mandatory continuing education and training program to ensure the delivery of up-to-date and relevant services.

Section 9. *Protection Against Forcible Administration of Medical Treatment or Enrollment in Programs.* – All persons administering treatment, counseling, or medication, or involved in implementing DOH programs mandated in this Act shall respect the right of each patient to determine the medical treatment to be administered to them as well as the programs where they will participate, if any.

Section 10. *PhilHealth Coverage on Early Detection and Screening Fees.* – The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation shall include the cost of early detection and screening programs for Lupus as an available benefit to its members. The early detection and screening fees shall be applied to, among others, testing costs, education, follow-up, and reasonable overhead expenses.

Section 11. *Donations and Grants.* – The DOH, UP-NIH, and other national government agencies concerned with the prevention, management, and treatment of Lupus are hereby authorized to receive donations and grants from local and international donor institutions, foundations, and foreign donor agencies: *Provided*, That pertinent laws and rules on the receipt, accounting, and disbursement thereof shall be complied with.

Section 12. *National Lupus Awareness Week.* – To develop and expand national interest and participation in the issues and concerns of Lupus patients, the first week of May shall annually be celebrated as “Lupus Awareness Week”. The

week-long activity shall be spearheaded by the DOH, in coordination with other concerned agencies, institutions, and stakeholders.

Section 13. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act, under the budget of the DOH.

Section 14. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The DOH shall, within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act, promulgate the rules and regulations to effectively implement the provisions of this Act.

Section 15. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder thereof not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 16. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, issuances, and rules and regulations or parts thereof contrary or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

Section 17. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,