



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

House Bill No. **7630**



Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE GERALD CLOYD ALEXIS V. GALANG**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Enshrined in the 1987 Philippine Constitution, specifically in Article II, Section 15, is the fundamental declaration that "The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them." This provision is not merely an aspirational policy but a binding mandate that obligates the government to act as the primary *parens patriae* (guardian of the people). Furthermore, Article II, Section 13 underscores the State's duty to prioritize the welfare of the vulnerable, mandating social justice by ensuring that the burdens of chronic illness do not disproportionately disenfranchise the marginalized.

Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE) represents a profound challenge to the constitutional guarantee of the right to health. As a chronic, autoimmune disorder with no known cure, SLE is characterized by the body's immune system turning against its own tissues, attacking major organs and body systems. It is not merely a medical condition but a debilitating circumstance that threatens the "full and productive life" promised to every citizen.

Epidemiological data underscores the urgency of legislative intervention. Globally, lupus afflicts over five million individuals, with a staggering 90% of those affected being women—a demographic that necessitates special protection under the State's mandate for gender equality and women's welfare. In the Philippines, the prevalence is estimated at 30 to 50 individuals per 100,000, with SLE accounting for approximately 70% of all lupus cases. These statistics indicate that the illness has reached a threshold of public health significance that can no longer be addressed solely by private medical efforts.

Despite the prevalence of this disease, the current healthcare landscape fails to satisfy the constitutional standard of health protection. The State's obligation to ensure "accessible and affordable health care services," as enshrined in Article XIII, Section 11, is currently compromised for lupus patients.

In light of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is a necessary exercise of the State's police power to promote the general welfare. This proposed measure seeks to establish a National Health Program for Lupus, thereby operationalizing the State's constitutional mandate.


GERALD GALANG
2nd Legislative District, City of Valenzuela



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AN ACT
INSTITUTING A NATIONAL HEALTH PROGRAM TO COMBAT SYSTEMIC LUPUS
ERYTHEMATOSUS (SLE) DISEASE, 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**".

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

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* - For the purpose of this Act, "Systemic Lupus Erythematosus" (SLE) or "Lupus" shall be construed to mean 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, as diagnosed by a competent medical practitioner.

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

- a) to promote public awareness, education, and information on issues concerning Lupus;
- b) to promote and provide mechanisms for early identification, screening, and diagnosis of persons suffering from Lupus;
- c) to 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) to undertake research and collaborate with other institutions for the conduct of research activities pertaining to the disease;
- e) to provide an avenue for the sharing of best practices on issues relating to early detection, prevention, cure, treatment, and rehabilitation of persons diagnosed with Lupus;
- f) to network with other organizations, institutions, and professionals working on public programs for persons diagnosed with Lupus;

- g) to promote an advocacy discouraging bias against and stereotyping of afflicted persons; and
- h) to establish a sustainable support network for families of persons diagnosed with Lupus.

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

- a) orientation and counseling services for families of newly-diagnosed persons 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 the early detection, prevention, and treatment of Lupus, and best practices for the care of diagnosed persons with Lupus; and
- d) continuing education and training programs on the proper care of diagnosed persons with Lupus, in collaboration with medical societies and hospital associations.

SEC. 6. *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 the corresponding policy, and implement strategies and necessary health interventions, to address the needs faced by persons 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 to formulate policies to combat Lupus.

SEC. 7. *Continuing Education and Training of Health Personnel and Service Providers on Lupus Management and Treatment.* – All DOH staff and healthcare providers providing 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.

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

SEC. 9. *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 one of the available benefits to its members. The early detection and screening fees shall be applied to, among others, testing costs, education, follow-up, and reasonable overhead expenses.

SEC. 10. *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.

SEC. 11. *National Lupus Awareness Week.* – In order 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." This weeklong activity will be spearheaded by the DOH, in coordination with other concerned agencies, institutions, and stakeholders.

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

SEC. 13. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within six (6) months from the date of effectivity of this Act, the DOH shall promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

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

SEC. 15. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules, and regulations or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,