

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
QUEZON CITY

20th Congress
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **8663**



Introduced by: **REP. MARK CHOLO I. VIOLAGO**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The proposed measure entitled “Vision Care for Kids Act” seeks to institutionalize a grant program that will provide comprehensive eye examinations and necessary treatment for Filipino children, with priority given to those under eight (8) years old.

Vision problems, if left undetected or untreated, can significantly hinder a child’s learning, development, and overall well-being. Studies have shown that early detection and correction of visual impairment greatly improve academic performance, social interaction, and quality of life. Unfortunately, many children, especially in underserved communities, do not have access to timely eye care services.

According to the Philippine Eye Disease Study (2018), about 1.98% of Filipinos live with visual impairment, including children. While this percentage may seem small, it represents thousands of children whose education and daily life are affected.

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) has tracked data on visually impaired children ages 3–6 from 2019 to 2024. This shows that vision problems are already present in preschool years, highlighting the need for early screening and intervention.

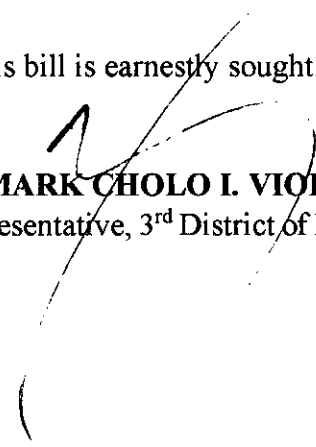
This bill mandates the Department of Health (DOH), through the Secretary of Health, to administer grants to local government units (LGUs) for the implementation of vision care programs. These programs shall include:

- Comprehensive eye examinations by licensed optometrists or ophthalmologists;
- Provision of treatment or corrective services following such examinations; and
- Development and dissemination of educational materials for parents, teachers, and health care practitioners to recognize signs of visual impairment in children.

The measure also ensures accountability by requiring LGUs to submit applications detailing existing vision programs, plans for the use of grant funds, and strategies to complement existing government efforts. Furthermore, the Department of Education (DepEd), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and relevant agencies are tasked to promulgate implementing rules and regulations within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act.

By institutionalizing vision care for children, this bill affirms the State's constitutional duty to protect and promote the right to health of all Filipinos, and to ensure that every child is given equal opportunity to succeed in education and life.

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



MARK CHOLO I. VIOLAGO
Representative, 3rd District of Bulacan

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**AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A GRANT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE
VISION CARE TO CHILDREN**

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 “Vision Care for Kids”

Section 2. Definition of Terms. —The following terms as used in this Act shall be defined as follows:

(a) Comprehensive Eye Examination shall include an assessment of a patient's history, general medical observation, external and ophthalmoscopic examination, visual acuity, ocular alignment and motility, refraction, and as appropriate, binocular vision or gross visual fields, performed by an optometrist or an ophthalmologist.

(b) LGU shall refer to a local government unit, which may be a province, city or a municipality.

(c) Secretary refers to the Secretary of Health.

Section 3. Grant Regarding Vision Care for Children. - The Secretary shall carry out this grant program to award grants to LGUs on the basis of an established review process for the purpose of complementing existing government efforts for:

(a) Providing comprehensive eye examinations by a licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist for children who have been previously identified through a vision screening or eye examination by a licensed health care provider or vision screener as needing such services, with priority given to children who are under 8 years old;

(b) Providing treatment or services, subsequent to the examinations described in the aforementioned paragraph, necessary to correct vision problems; and

(c) Developing and disseminating to parents, teachers, and health care practitioners' educational materials on recognizing signs of visual impairment in children; Provided that the LGU shall not expend more the 20 percent of the amount received under the grant to carry out the purpose described in this paragraph.

Section 4. Criteria and Coordination. — The Secretary, in consultation with the appropriate professional and consumer organizations including individuals with knowledge of age appropriate vision services, shall develop a criteria governing the operation of the grant program under Section 3, and for the collection of data related to vision assessment and utilization of follow up services.

Section 5. Application. — To be eligible to receive a grant under Section 3, an LGU shall submit to the Secretary an application in such form, made in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require, including the following:

- (a) Information on existing vision programs;
- (b) A plan for the use of grant funds, including how funds will be used to complement existing State efforts (including possible partnerships with non-profit entities);
- (c) A plan to determine if a grant eligible child has been identified as provided for in Section 2; and
- (d) A description of how funds will be used to provide items or services only as a secondary payer to any local government complement.

Section 6. Implementing Rules and Regulations. -The DepEd, CHED, and relevant national agencies and organizations shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act.

Section 7. Separability Clause. -If any section or provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the Act shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 8. Repealing Clause. - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof, inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 9. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,