

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

20th Congress
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **8727**



Introduced by Rep. Maria Vanessa C. Aumentado

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The right to health is a fundamental right guaranteed by the 1987 Constitution. However, for millions of Filipino children with neurodevelopmental conditions such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) require early intervention, specialized therapy, and continuous support to reach their full potential. Despite the growing number of diagnosed cases in the Philippines, access to therapy and professional services remains limited and costly, especially for families in rural and low-income communities.

The rising prevalence of ASD estimates approximately 1 in 100 children in the Philippines, translating to roughly 1.2 to 1.5 million Filipinos on the spectrum. Similarly, ADHD statistics show a prevalence of around 7 percent within the Filipino community. Despite this staggering numbers, a large portion of the population remains undiagnosed or misdiagnosed due to persistent social stigma and severe lack of diagnostic resources.

This measure seeks to establish Comprehensive Therapy and Support Centers in every province and highly urbanized city nationwide to ensure that children with special needs have access to developmental screening, behavioral therapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, psychological services, and family support programs.

By expanding access to specialized services and strengthening coordination among national agencies and local government units, this bill aims to improve the

developmental outcomes, educational opportunities, and quality of life of children with ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and other developmental conditions.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MVA', with a checkmark-like flourish at the end.

MARIA VANESSA C. AUMENTADO

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

20th Congress
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **8727**

Introduced by Rep. Maria Vanessa C. Aumentado

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING COMPREHENSIVE THERAPY AND SUPPORT CENTERS
FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS, INCLUDING ATTENTION DEFICIT
HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD) AND AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER
(ASD), IN EVERY PROVINCE AND HIGHLY URBANIZED CITY NATIONWIDE,
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 Special Needs Therapy and Support Centers Act."

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote and protect the rights and welfare of children with special needs by ensuring access to early diagnosis, intervention, therapy, and continuous support services. The State recognizes the need to strengthen programs that support children diagnosed with neurodevelopmental conditions such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Towards this end, the government shall establish accessible therapy and support centers nationwide to provide affordable and comprehensive services for children with special needs and their families.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. For purposes of this Act:

- a. Children with Special Needs** – Individuals below eighteen (18) years old who require specialized educational, behavioral, or therapeutic services due to developmental or neurological conditions.
- b. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)** – A neurodevelopmental condition characterized by persistent patterns of inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity that interfere with functioning or development.
- c. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)** – A neurodevelopmental condition characterized by challenges in social communication and restricted or repetitive patterns of behavior or interests.
- d. Therapy and Support Centers** – Government-supported facilities that provide multidisciplinary services for children with special needs.

SEC. 4. Establishment of Comprehensive Therapy and Support Centers. The Department of Health (DOH), in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the Department of Education (DepEd), shall establish Comprehensive Therapy and Support Centers in every province and highly urbanized city in the country.

SEC. 5. Comprehensive Services Offered. Each center shall provide the following:

1. **Diagnostic and Assessment Services** - Early screening and developmental evaluations conducted by pediatricians and child psychologist
2. **Therapeutic Interventions** – Speech therapy occupational therapy, physical therapy and behavioral management programs tailored to the individual needs of a child.
3. **Family Support and Counselling** – Psycho-social support, education, and training programs for parents, guardians and siblings to help them manage and support the child's development at home.
4. **Educational Transition Support** – Coordination with the Department of Education (DepEd) to assist in the transition of children into mainstream or especial education program.

SEC. 6. Multidisciplinary Team. Each center shall be staffed with qualified professionals including developmental pediatricians, psychiatrists, psychologists, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, behavioral therapists, social workers, and special education specialists.

SEC. 7. Accessibility and Affordability. Services provided by the centers shall be made affordable and accessible. Indigent families may receive subsidized or free services subject to guidelines issued by the Department of Health, Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) is mandated to develop a comprehensive benefit package that covers the essential therapies and interventions for ADHD and ASD

SEC. 8. Coordination with Local Government Units. Local Government Units shall assist in the implementation of this Act by providing facilities, logistical support, and community outreach programs.

SEC. 9. Public Awareness and Education. The DOH, DepEd, and DSWD shall conduct nationwide awareness campaigns on ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and the importance of early detection and intervention.

SEC. 10. Appropriations. The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charge against the current year's appropriations of the DOH and thereafter shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 11. Implementing Rules and Regulations. Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Health, in coordination with relevant agencies, shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations.

SEC. 12. Separability Clause. If any provision of this Act is declared invalid, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 13. Repealing Clause. All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 14. Effectivity. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two newspapers of general circulation.

Approve.