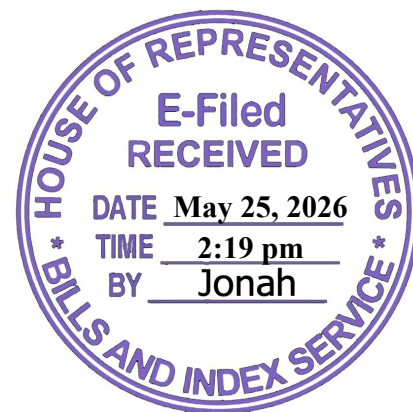


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9401



Introduced by: **REP. SALVADOR A. PLEYTO, SR.**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

A diagnosis of a critical illness in a child—be it cancer, rare genetic disorders, or end-stage organ failure—is a devastating blow that ripples through an entire family. In the Philippines, the "catastrophic" cost of medical care often pushes families into deep poverty.

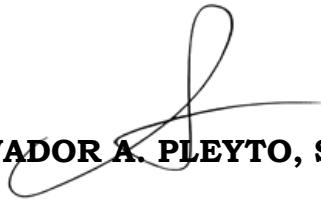
While programs like PhilHealth and the Malasakit Centers provide a safety net, they are often insufficient to cover the specialized, long-term, and multi-disciplinary care these children require.

Beyond the hospital bill, families face "hidden" costs: the loss of income as parents become full-time caregivers, the travel expenses from rural provinces to specialized centers in Manila, and the psychological toll on the child and their siblings.

This bill, the "Pediatric Critical Illness Support Act," seeks to bridge these gaps. It provides for a dedicated National Pediatric Fund, mandates the establishment of regional specialized care wings, grants "Caregiver Leave" for parents, and ensures that a child's education is not abandoned during treatment.

No parent should be forced to choose between their child's survival and their family's financial existence. It is the duty of the State to ensure that every child, regardless of their economic background, has a fighting chance.

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


SALVADOR A. PLEYTO, SR.

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9401

Introduced by: **REP. SALVADOR A. PLEYTO, SR.**

AN ACT PROVIDING COMPREHENSIVE GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AND BENEFITS FOR CHILDREN WITH CRITICAL ILLNESSES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Pediatric Critical Illness Support Act."

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy* - The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people, particularly children who are the most vulnerable. It is hereby declared the policy of the State to provide comprehensive medical, financial, and psychosocial support to children diagnosed with life-threatening or critical illnesses.

SEC. 3. *Coverage* - As used in this Act:

- Critical Illness refers to life-threatening conditions, including, but not limited to, pediatric cancers, congenital heart diseases requiring surgery, chronic kidney disease (Stage 4 and above), rare diseases as defined under R.A. 10747, and other conditions requiring intensive, long-term medical intervention.
- Pediatric Patient refers to any Filipino citizen aged zero (0) to eighteen (18) years.

SEC. 4. *The National Pediatric Critical Illness Fund (NPCIF).* - There is hereby created a dedicated fund managed by the Department of Health (DOH). This fund shall cover:

1. Full Subsidy for medications, laboratory tests, and surgical procedures not fully covered by PhilHealth.
2. Travel and Subsistence Allowance for patients and one (1) watcher coming from provinces to specialized regional hospitals.
3. Prosthetics and Assistive Devices necessary for the child's quality of life.

SEC. 5. *Specialized Pediatric Wings.* - All DOH-retained regional hospitals are mandated to establish a specialized Pediatric Critical Care Wing equipped with specialized equipment (e.g., pediatric dialysis, chemotherapy units) to decentralize care from Metro Manila.

SEC. 6. *Caregiver Support and Employment Protection.* -

Paid Pediatric Leave: Employed parents or legal guardians of children with critical illnesses shall be entitled to an additional twenty (20) days of paid leave per year, on top of existing leave credits, specifically for medical appointments and hospitalizations.

Non-Discrimination: No employer shall terminate or demote an employee based on their status as a caregiver for a critically ill child.

SEC. 7. *Educational Continuity Program.* - The Department of Education (DepEd) shall implement a "Hospital-Schooling Program" and flexible home-study modules to ensure that children undergoing long-term treatment can continue their education without being marked absent or dropped from the rolls.

SEC. 8. *Mental Health Support.* - The DOH, in coordination with the DSWD, shall provide mandatory, free psychological counseling for the patient, their parents, and siblings to address the emotional trauma associated with chronic illness.

SEC. 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).* - Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DOH, in coordination with PhilHealth, DSWD, and DepEd, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for its effective implementation.

SEC. 10. *Appropriations.* - The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the DOH. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA).

SEC. 11. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 12. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,