



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

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9498



Introduced by Representatives Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, Yedda Marie K. Romualdez, Andrew Julian K. Romualdez and Jude A. Acidre

AN ACT
EXPANDING HEALTH BENEFITS AND WELLNESS PROGRAMS FOR
SENIOR CITIZENS, FURTHER AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9994,
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE “EXPANDED SENIOR CITIZENS ACT
OF 2010,” AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Philippine Constitution (Article XV, Section 4) explicitly mandates the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people and to afford full protection to the elderly. While the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010 (R.A. No. 9994) and the Universal Health Care Act (R.A. No. 11223) have laid crucial foundations for elderly welfare, systematic gaps persist in delivering holistic, preventive, and wellness-oriented care tailored to the needs of senior citizens.

Despite existing benefits such as free hospitalization and discounted medicines, many senior citizens continue to face preventable health deterioration, unmet mental health needs, and limited access to rehabilitative and wellness programs. The lack of structured preventive care contributes to avoidable hospitalizations, reduced quality of life, and unnecessary financial burdens on families and the healthcare system.

The Expanded Senior Citizens Health and Wellness Act addresses these gaps by institutionalizing a comprehensive and proactive approach to senior

health and wellness. The measure provides for mandatory annual preventive check-ups, the establishment of age-friendly wellness centers nationwide with rehabilitative and mental health services, mobile and telehealth programs for homebound and rural seniors, and strengthened inter-agency coordination among the DOH, DSWD, LGUs, and PhilHealth. It also includes digital literacy and inclusion programs to empower senior citizens in navigating online health services and combating misinformation, with dedicated funding mechanisms to ensure sustainability.

With the Filipino population rapidly aging and projected to reach fourteen percent by 2030, this legislation is urgent. By emphasizing preventive care, wellness, and digital inclusion, it seeks to uphold the dignity and welfare of senior citizens, reduce long-term healthcare costs, and foster a healthier, more resilient, and digitally empowered society.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly requested.



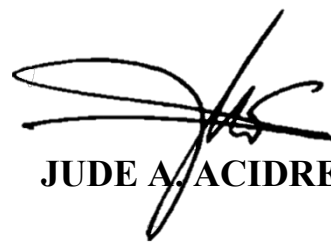
FERDINAND MARTIN G. ROMUALDEZ



YEDDA MARIE K. ROMUALDEZ



ANDREW JULIAN K. ROMUALDEZ



JUDE A. ACIDRE



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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 "Expanded Senior Citizens Health and Wellness Act".

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote and protect the health, dignity, and overall well-being of senior citizens and to recognize their continuing role in national development. Toward this end, the State shall ensure accessible, comprehensive, and responsive health services for senior citizens, including preventive, curative, rehabilitative, and wellness programs.

The State shall likewise promote active aging and support mechanisms that enable senior citizens to live healthy, productive, and meaningful lives, regardless of socio-economic status.

SEC. 3. *Amendment to Section 5 of Republic Act No. 9994.* – Section 5 of Republic Act No. 9994 is hereby amended to revise subsection (c) and to include an additional provision under subsection (i), to read as follows:

"SEC. 5. Government Assistance. - The National Government shall provide the following assistance to senior citizens:

(a) xxx

(b) xxx

(c) Health. – The Department of Health, in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the National Commission of Senior Citizens, and local government units, shall establish and implement a comprehensive national health program for senior citizens and ensure the delivery of integrated and age-responsive health services, which shall include, but not be limited to:

(1) ***Preventive Health Services.*** – Provision of regular and comprehensive preventive health assessments and screening services for senior citizens, including medical, dental, and mental health evaluations, as well as recommended immunizations;

(2) ***Community-Based Wellness Programs.*** – Development of accessible community-based wellness, physical activity, rehabilitation, and nutrition programs that promote healthy and active aging among senior citizens;

- (3) ***Mobile and Home-Based Health Services.*** – Provision of mobile health services and home-based care for indigent, bedridden, and geographically isolated senior citizens;
- (4) ***Access to Essential Health Services and Assistive Devices.*** – Facilitation of access to telemedicine services, maintenance medicines, and medically necessary assistive devices such as wheelchairs, hearing aids, prosthetic devices, and similar equipment;
- (5) ***Capacity-Building in Geriatric Care.*** – Strengthening the training of health professionals, community health workers, and caregivers in geriatric medicine and the management of age-related health conditions;
- (6) ***Integration with National Health Programs.*** – Alignment of senior citizens' health services with existing national health programs of the DOH and other relevant government agencies; and
- (7) ***Establishment of Senior Citizens' Wards.*** – Government hospitals shall establish dedicated geriatric wards or units to cater to the health needs of senior citizens requiring hospital confinement: Provided, That such wards may be temporarily utilized for emergency purposes when public necessity so requires.

The funding requirements for the implementation of this subsection shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

- (d) xxx
- (e) xxx
- (f) xxx
- (g) xxx
- (h) xxx

(i) **Digital Literacy and Inclusion Programs.** – The Department of Information and Communications Technology, in coordination with the National Commission of Senior Citizens and other relevant stakeholders, shall develop and implement digital literacy and inclusion programs for senior citizens to enhance their capacity to utilize digital technologies, access online services, and safely participate in the digital environment.

Such programs shall include training in basic digital skills, access to online government services, cybersecurity awareness, and responsible use of online platforms.

The necessary funding for these programs shall likewise be included in the annual General Appropriations Act."

SEC. 4. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary to implement this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act. Additional funding support may be sourced from revenues allocated for health programs under existing laws and from contributions or grants from government-owned or controlled corporations and other lawful sources, subject to existing budgeting, accounting, and auditing rules and regulations.

SEC. 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Health, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the Department of Information and Communications Technology, and the National Commission of Senior Citizens shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 6. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 7. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 8. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,