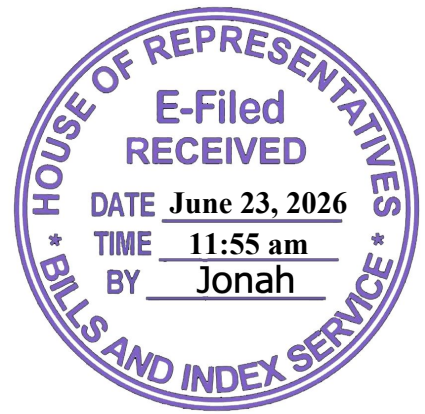


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 9916



Introduced by **Representative ERIC G. YAP**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to establish a special benefit package that shall provide senior citizens and indigents free dental, vision, and hearing assistive devices.

Untreated vision impairment, hearing loss, and oral health conditions are common medical issues that are most oftentimes overlooked. These conditions drastically reduce productivity and compromise the quality of life of our elderly and economically disadvantaged citizens. Essential medical devices remain painfully out of reach due to prohibitive costs: dentures can cost up to Forty thousand pesos (Php 40,000.00) per arch, prescription eyeglasses typically ranges from One thousand five hundred pesos to more than Five thousand pesos (Php 5,000.00) per pair, and hearing aids may cost up to over Two hundred fifty thousand pesos (Php 250,000.00) per ear.

Senior citizens commonly experience age-related deterioration in eyesight, hearing, and oral health, while indigent individuals frequently forego treatment because of financial constraints. The absence of appropriate assistive devices contribute to preventable disability and a lower quality of life.

The proposed measure implements a special benefit package that will fully cover the cost of assistive devices such as dentures, prescription eyeglasses, and hearing aids for qualified beneficiaries. It likewise ensures that recipients undergo proper medical, dental, or ophthalmologic evaluation to guarantee appropriate diagnosis and prescription.

This vital piece of legislation strengthens the State's commitment to protect the welfare, dignity, and well-being of senior citizens and indigent Filipinos. The provision of these necessary healthcare devices restores their autonomy and empowers them to participate actively in community life.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate approval of this measure is earnestly sought.


HON. ERIC G. YAP

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TWENTIETH CONGRESS
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House Bill No. **9916**

Introduced by **Representative ERIC G. YAP**

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR FREE DENTAL, VISION, AND HEARING ASSISTIVE DEVICES, INCLUDING DENTURES, PRESCRIPTION GLASSES, AND HEARING AIDS TO SENIOR CITIZENS AND INDIGENTS, 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 “*Free Health Aids for Seniors and Indigents Act*”.

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* — It is hereby the declared policy of the State to adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development that ensures the availability of essential goods, health services, and other social services to all people. In line with its commitment to accessible and inclusive healthcare, the State shall provide assistive devices such as dentures, hearing aids, and prescription glasses. Towards this end, the State shall give full support to the improvement of the total well-being of senior citizens and indigents.

SEC. 3. *Free Dental, Vision, and Hearing Assistive Devices.* — The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), in coordination with the Department of Health (DOH), shall develop and implement a special benefit package that shall fully cover the cost of assistive devices, including but not limited to complete or partial dentures, prescription eyeglasses, and hearing aids, for qualified senior citizens and indigents.

Medical and dental consultations, including the prescription of the assistive devices covered under this Act, shall be conducted in the Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT), dental, or ophthalmology departments, or, in the case of senior citizens, through the geriatric center of national or local government hospitals.

SEC. 4. *Persons Covered.* — This Act shall cover: (a) senior citizens, defined as Filipino citizens who are at least sixty (60) years of age; and (b) indigent persons, defined as individuals with no visible means of income or whose income is deemed

insufficient for family subsistence, as determined by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

SEC. 5. *Appropriations.* – The appropriations necessary to implement the provisions of this Act and its implementing rules shall be included in the respective budgets of the DOH, the PhilHealth, and the DSWD under the General Appropriations Act (GAA).

SEC. 6. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within thirty (30) days from the approval of this Act, the DOH and the PhilHealth, in coordination with the National Commission of Senior Citizens (NCSC), the DSWD, and other relevant agencies, shall jointly formulate rules and guidelines necessary for the proper implementation and enforcement of this Act.

SEC. 7. *Separability Clause.* – If any portion or provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions hereof shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 8. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 9. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen days (15) after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a national newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,