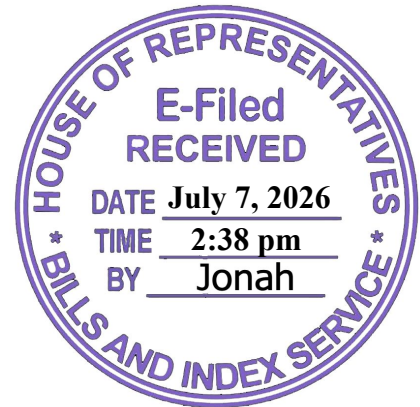




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 10032



Introduced by Representative Ann Matibag

**AN ACT EXPANDING PHILHEALTH COVERAGE FOR AUTISM SPECTRUM
DISORDER, STRENGTHENING BENEFIT PACKAGES FOR DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a lifelong neurodevelopmental condition requiring sustained, multidisciplinary, and often intensive interventions across the life course. While the State has taken an important step through the establishment of the Z Benefit Package for Children with Developmental Disabilities under PhilHealth Circular No. 2017-0029, coverage remains limited in scope, duration, and financial adequacy.

At present, PhilHealth benefits for autism are largely confined to early diagnosis and a capped number of therapy sessions, leaving families to shoulder the long-term cost of occupational therapy, speech therapy, behavioral interventions, assistive services, and mental health support. Moreover, coverage is largely restricted to children, with minimal support for adolescents and adults with autism who continue to require services for independent living, employment readiness, and social integration.

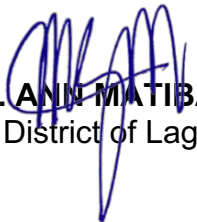
While the proposed “Autism Care Act of 2025” establishes a comprehensive national program and mandates PhilHealth inclusion, there remains a critical need to **define, expand, and institutionalize specific benefit packages within PhilHealth** to ensure meaningful financial risk protection for persons with autism and their families.

This bill seeks to strengthen the National Health Insurance Program by:

- Expanding PhilHealth benefit packages for autism across the life span;
- Increasing coverage for diagnostic, therapeutic, behavioral, and assistive interventions;
- Institutionalizing outpatient, community-based, and long-term care coverage;
- Ensuring provider accreditation, quality standards, and nationwide accessibility; and
- Establishing sustainable financing mechanisms for autism-related services.

This measure complements, operationalizes, and reinforces existing and proposed policies without duplication, ensuring that the State's commitment to universal health care fully includes persons with autism.

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



REP. ANN MATIBAG
First District of Laguna



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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 “**PhilHealth Autism Benefit Expansion Act.**”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. It is hereby declared the policy of the State to ensure that all persons with autism have equitable access to affordable, adequate, and continuous health care services under the National Health Insurance Program, consistent with the principles of universal health care, inclusivity, and social justice.

SEC. 3. Coverage Expansion. PhilHealth shall expand existing benefit packages for developmental disabilities to include comprehensive, life-course coverage for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), including but not limited to:

- (a) Early screening and developmental surveillance;
- (b) Comprehensive diagnostic services;
- (c) Behavioral and developmental therapies, including Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA);
- (d) Occupational, speech, and physical therapy without restrictive caps inconsistent with clinical need;

- (e) Mental health and psychosocial support services;
- (f) Assistive technologies and communication devices;
- (g) Caregiver training and family support interventions.

SEC. 4. Removal of Restrictive Benefit Caps. PhilHealth shall review and progressively remove or increase existing limitations on the number of therapy sessions and benefit ceilings, ensuring that coverage is needs-based, evidence-based, and developmentally appropriate.

SEC. 5. Lifetime and Continuum of Care Coverage. Coverage shall not be limited to children. PhilHealth shall ensure benefits for:

- (a) Adolescents transitioning to adulthood;
- (b) Adults with autism requiring ongoing therapy, mental health care, and functional support;
- (c) Geriatric individuals with autism, as applicable.

SEC. 6. Outpatient and Community-Based Care. PhilHealth shall institutionalize outpatient, home-based, and community-based service coverage, recognizing that autism interventions are primarily non-hospital-based.

SEC. 7. Accreditation of Providers. PhilHealth shall expand accreditation to include:

- Developmental pediatricians
- Psychologists and psychiatrists
- Licensed therapists (OT, speech, PT)
- Behavioral therapists
- Autism centers and special education-linked therapy providers

Provided that quality and regulatory standards are met.

SEC. 8. Integration with Universal Health Care. Autism services shall be integrated into primary care benefit packages under the Universal Health Care Act, including referral systems and continuity of care.

SEC. 9. Financial Protection and No Balance Billing Policy. For indigent, low-income, and PWD-registered individuals with autism, PhilHealth shall adopt zero or no balance billing schemes for essential services.

SEC. 10. Data Collection and Monitoring. PhilHealth, in coordination with the Department of Health and the National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA), shall establish a dedicated autism utilization and outcomes database to guide policy, actuarial adjustments, and program expansion.

SEC. 11. Periodic Review of Benefit Packages. PhilHealth shall conduct a biennial review of autism benefit packages to ensure alignment with global clinical standards and cost realities.

SEC. 12. Implementing Rules and Regulations. Within six (6) months from effectivity, PhilHealth, in coordination with the Department of Health, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations.

SEC. 13. Appropriations. Funding necessary for implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act and sourced from the National Health Insurance Fund.

SEC. 14. Separability Clause. If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SEC. 15. Repealing Clause. Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

SEC. 16. Effectivity. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette and at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,