



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

20th CONGRESS
2nd Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 10397



Introduced by Representative SITTIE SHAHARA "BAI DIMPLE" I. MASTURA

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH HOME VISITATION PROGRAM

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines remains one of the countries with the highest teenage pregnancy rates in Asia and the second in Southeast Asia, with over 500 girls aged 15 to 19 becoming mothers each day. The increasing number of pregnancies among girls under 15 with live births in the 10 to 14 age group rose from 2,411 in 2019 to 3,343 in 2023, marking a 6.6% increase in just four years.

In 2023 alone, 17 young women under 20 had already given birth five or more times, and 38 girls under 15 experienced repeated pregnancies, with the youngest recorded case involving a girl who became pregnant at just 8 years old and gave birth when she was 9.

The rising cases of teenage pregnancies in the Philippines are a significant public health and development concern, such that without a strong and immediate intervention and response, it is a crisis that threatens national economic growth.

It is the policy of the State to equally protect the life of both the mother and the unborn upon conception under Article II, Section 12 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution. In view of this provision, the State must endeavor to provide prenatal and postnatal maternity care services in the home of pregnant teenagers.

The Department of Health and local government units already provide free maternal health services; however, due to circumstances beyond their control, many pregnant teenagers have not availed of these services because of distance to health centers, socio-economic status, and the need for privacy and discretion.

This bill therefore seeks to expand the availability and accessibility of maternal health services to these expectant adolescent mothers and reduce maternal and infant mortality rates, more so in many remote areas of the country.

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

SITTIE SHAHARA "BAI DIMPLE" I. MASTURA
Representative

Lone District, Maguindanao del Norte with Cotabato City



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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 “**Expanded Maternal and Infant Care Act**”.

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the State to equally protect the life of the mother and unborn child from conception. In addition to maternity care services provided in health facilities, the State shall administer prenatal and postnatal maternity and infant care services under a home visitation program to protect the health and well-being of both mother and child.

SEC. 3. Establishment of Maternal and Infant Health Home Visitation Program. – The Secretary of the Department of Health (DOH) shall require health centers to designate an appropriate health professional or a qualified nonprofessional acting under the supervision of a health care professional who shall render maternal and infant care services in the home of eligible individuals.

SEC. 4. Eligibility to Avail of Home Visitation Services. – A pregnant woman not more than twenty-one (21) years old, or families with an infant up to the age of one (1) year, belonging to the low-income brackets below the poverty threshold shall be eligible to receive the maternal and infant care services provided under this Act.

SEC. 5. Maternal and Infant Health Services. – The maternal and infant care services that shall be provided in the home of eligible individuals shall include the following:

- (a) Instruction and counselling in all aspects of prenatal care, childbirth and motherhood
- (b) Nutritional counselling
- (c) General family counselling, including child and family development; and
- (d) Physical examination and referral for further medical care for a mother and/or infant

SEC. 6. Prohibition on Abortion. – Any maternal and infant care service which shall be made available under this Act shall not be construed to advocate, promote, or encourage abortion.

SEC. 7. *Separability Clause.* – Should any portion or provision of this Act be declared unconstitutional, the remainder thereof not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 8. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, proclamations, or administrative regulations that are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly,

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

Approved.