

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City
20TH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 10488



Introduced by: **REP. JOEL R. CHUA**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Every day, thousands of elderly Filipinos rely on medicines to manage hypertension, diabetes, arthritis, and other chronic illnesses. Yet, for many of them, the rising cost of medicines has become a burden too heavy to bear.

Too often, our senior citizens are forced to make painful choices. Some skip doses to make their medicines last longer. Others delay buying prescriptions because their limited pensions or savings are barely enough to cover their daily necessities. But this is not right. This is far from what they deserve.

Our senior citizens have spent decades working, raising families, building communities, and contributing to our nation's progress. *Panahon na upang suklian naman natin ang kanilang mga sakripisyo sa pamamagitan ng tunay at konkretong malasakit.* They deserve the assurance that the medicines they depend on will always be within their reach.

This measure seeks to establish a Maintenance Medicine Voucher Program that will provide qualified senior citizens with monthly maintenance medicine vouchers worth One Thousand Pesos (₱1,000.00). The vouchers may be redeemed at Department of Health hospitals and accredited hospitals and pharmacies, making assistance simple, accessible, and convenient for elderly beneficiaries.

Sa kulturang Pilipino, hindi natin pinababayaan ang ating mga magulang, lolo, at lola. Caring for those who once cared for us is more than an act of gratitude—it is a reflection of who we are as a people. Ultimately, by ensuring that our senior citizens receive the medicines they need, we help them have more meaningful time with the families they love.

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


JOEL R. CHUA
Representative, 3rd District, Manila

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AN ACT PROVIDING MAINTENANCE MEDICINE VOUCHERS FOR SENIOR CITIZENS 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 "Senior Citizens Maintenance Voucher Act."

Section 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to protect and promote the health and well-being of senior citizens by ensuring their continued access to essential maintenance medicines. Recognizing that many senior citizens suffer from chronic illnesses and often struggle to afford lifelong medication, the State shall establish a simple, accessible, and efficient voucher program to help them obtain their prescribed maintenance medicines.

Section 3. *Establishment of the Maintenance Medicine Voucher Program.* The Department of Health (DOH) shall establish and administer a Maintenance Medicine Voucher Program that shall provide qualified senior citizens with maintenance medicine vouchers worth One Thousand Pesos (₱1,000.00) every month.

The voucher shall be used solely for the purchase of prescribed maintenance medicines and shall not be convertible to cash or transferable.

Section 4. *Qualified Beneficiaries.* – A Filipino senior citizen shall be entitled to the monthly voucher upon presentation of:

- (a) A valid Senior Citizen Identification Card issued by the Office for Senior Citizens Affairs (OSCA) or any government-issued identification showing that the holder is at least sixty (60) years of age; and
- (b) A valid prescription issued by a licensed physician within the preceding three (3) months indicating the maintenance medicines required by the senior citizen.

Section 5. *Redemption of Vouchers.* – Maintenance medicine vouchers may be redeemed only for prescribed maintenance medicines at:

- (a) Department of Health hospitals;

- (b) DOH-retained medical centers;
- (c) Government hospitals designated by the Department of Health; and
- (d) Private hospitals and pharmacies accredited by the Department of Health for this program.

The Department of Health shall ensure that participating establishments are reasonably accessible to senior citizens in all provinces, cities, and municipalities.

Section 6. Accreditation and Reimbursement. – The Department of Health shall establish a simplified accreditation process for private hospitals and pharmacies participating in the Program.

Accredited establishments shall honor the vouchers and shall be reimbursed by the Department of Health in accordance with the implementing rules and regulations.

Section 7. Responsibilities of Local Government Units. – Local government units, through their Offices for Senior Citizens Affairs (OSCA), City and Municipal Health Offices, Rural Health Units, and Barangay Health Stations, shall assist in informing qualified senior citizens of the Program and facilitating the issuance of vouchers.

Section 8. Implementing Agency. – The Department of Health shall be the lead implementing agency and shall coordinate with the National Commission of Senior Citizens, the Department of the Interior and Local Government, local government units, and other concerned agencies for the effective implementation of this Act.

Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Health shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations.

Section 9. Appropriations. – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the Department of Health. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Section 10. Separability Clause. – If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall continue to be in full force and effect.

Section 11. Repealing Clause. – All laws, executive orders, and administrative orders or parts thereof inconsistent with any provision of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

Section 12. Effectivity Clause. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.