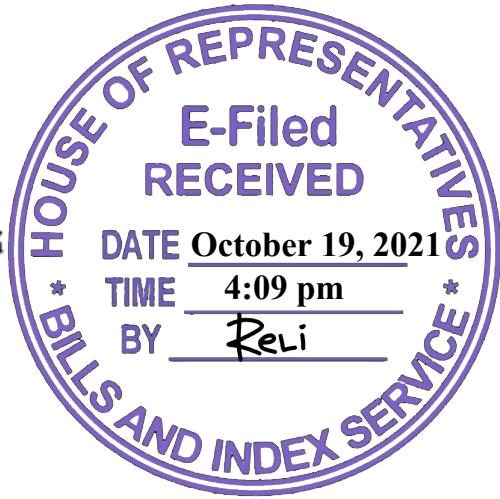


Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila
EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

House Resolution No. 2312



INTRODUCED BY
REP. ALFRED VARGAS

A RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, AND OTHER APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED INCREASE IN CASES OF SUICIDE AND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN THE COUNTRY AMIDST THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, WITH THE INTENTION OF ADDRESSING THIS ALARMING SOCIAL CONCERN, ASSESSING AND STRENGTHENING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MENTAL HEALTH ACT, AND PROMOTING THE WELL-BEING AND GENERAL WELFARE OF THE FILIPINO PEOPLE

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic and its resulting economic recession have negatively affected many people's mental health worldwide and created barriers for people already suffering from mental illnesses;

WHEREAS, in a global survey conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO), it was reported that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted or halted critical mental health services in 93% of countries worldwide while the demand for mental health services is increasing¹;

WHEREAS, in the Philippines, more people are reported to have died by suicide in 2020 as the pandemic began and dragged on, with the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reporting a 57% increase in the country's suicide rate compared to the preceding year²;

¹ <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/05-10-2020-covid-19-disrupting-mental-health-services-in-most-countries-who-survey>

² <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2021/07/06/2110596/pandemic-year-sees-57-rise-suicide-rate-philippines>

WHEREAS, the PSA reported that suicide is the 25th leading cause of death in 2020, from 31st place in 2019, taking the lives of 4,420 in 2020 compared to 2,810 deaths in 2019³;

WHEREAS, the National Center for Mental Health (NCMH) reported that it received a huge spike in the number of calls made to its hotlines since lockdowns were enforced in the country due to mostly anxiety-related concerns⁴;

WHEREAS, the Department of Health (DOH) has also acknowledged that the pandemic can greatly affect mental health and has called for a unified response to mental health by all stakeholders⁵;

WHEREAS, in June 2018, Republic Act No. 11036 also known as the “Mental Health Act” was enacted into law to provide necessary services for Filipinos affected by a mental health condition;

WHEREAS, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and in commemoration of the World Mental Health Day in 2020, the DOH Secretary noted that while the mandate provided by the Mental Health Act helps in giving the country enough leverage to ensure that mental health services will be given paramount importance, there is an urgent need for more assistance⁶;

WHEREAS, this alarming social concern greatly affects a huge number of the population with the Philippine WHO Special Initiative for Mental Health report conducted in early 2020 revealing that at least 3.6 million Filipinos suffer from one kind of mental, neurological, and substance use disorder⁷;

WHEREAS, the increasing number of suicide and other mental health concerns amidst the COVID-19 pandemic reveal the underlying gaps in the implementation of the National Mental Health Act that must be addressed immediately and conscientiously,

WHEREAS, apart from the statistics on the mental health situation of the country, stakeholders must also be provided with necessary and relevant reports on the allocation of the budget for mental health programs and the implementation of the National Strategic Plan of the Mental Health Act;

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ <https://doh.gov.ph/press-release/YOUR-MIND-MATTERS-DOH-CALLS-FOR-UNIFIED-RESPONSE-TO-MENTAL-HEALTH>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

WHEREAS, it is the duty of Congress to uphold the law and ensure that the State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people, including mental health, and instill health consciousness among them;

WHEREAS, amidst the aggravated challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the government must explore and employ the best strategies to address the mental health situation of the public, and provide proactive, accessible, and affordable services and programs for all;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, to direct the House Committee on Health, and other appropriate committees to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the reported increase in cases of suicide and mental health issues in the country amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, with the intention of addressing this alarming social concern, assessing and strengthening the implementation of the Mental Health Act, and promoting the well-being and general welfare of the Filipino people.

Adopted,



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