

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **2521**



INTRODUCED BY REP. PM VARGAS

AN ACT
CREATING THE PHILIPPINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND
PREVENTION, DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has taken most of the world by surprise, infecting more than five million persons, and taking the lives of at least three hundred thousand persons worldwide. It has become a pandemic that threatens countries without strong public health care systems and facilities for control and prevention of communicable and infectious diseases.

Our lack of institutional capacity to implement comprehensive public health management programs, especially on public health protection, shows the harsh reality that our country needs to modernize and upgrade our public health systems to decisively address the risks of communicable diseases.

From sudden cases of polio-related diseases, to human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)-related infections, to tuberculosis and dengue outbreaks, there reflects a need for an institution to focus and create scientifically-accurate and research-backed solutions to combat infectious and emerging diseases.

While the Department of Health has been effective to some degree of the delivery of health services amid the pandemic, we must strengthen its absorptive capacity and framework in dealing with difficult communicable diseases.

This bill seeks to establish a Philippine National Center for Disease Control and Prevention, which shall serve as the principal health protection agency of the Philippines aimed at preventing, protecting, and managing the spread of communicable and infectious diseases and other health emergencies in the country.

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



REP. PM VARGAS

Fifth District, Quezon City

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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 “Philippine Center for Disease Control and Prevention Act”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared the policy of the State:

- (a) To protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them;
- (b) To adopt, support, establish, and maintain an effective health mechanism responsive to the country’s health needs, and emergency;
- (c) To ensure the health and wellbeing of Filipinos and protect them from communicable diseases;
- (d) To prevent the emergence and transmission of serious diseases;
- (e) To provide a framework for communicable disease control and prevention in the country; and
- (f) To establish a health protection agency to save lives and protect people from health threats.

SECTION 3. Creation of the Philippine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. – There is hereby created an independent body to be known as the

Philippine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, hereinafter referred to as “CDC”.

The CDC shall be the principal agency tasked to identify, assess, and communicate current and emerging threats to human health posed by communicable diseases. It shall carry out activities and programs for the prevention and control of communicable diseases for the promotion of public health.

The CDC shall be attached to the Department of Health for policy and program coordination.

SECTION 4. Powers and Functions. – The CDC shall exercise the following powers and functions:

- (a) Establish procedures for systematically searching for, collecting, collating and analyzing information and data to identify emerging health threats in the country;
- (b) Undertake research activities in the diagnosis, control, and prevention of communicable diseases that are major causes of mortality and morbidity in the country;
- (c) Investigate disease outbreaks and other treats to public health;
- (d) Conduct clinical trials aimed at better understanding and control of communicable diseases in the country;
- (e) Foster the development of sufficient capacity for diagnosis, detection, identification, and characterization of infectious agents which may threaten public health;
- (f) Coordinate data collection, validation, analysis, and provide health information to protect against expensive and dangerous health threats;
- (g) Ensure that the public and any interested party are rapidly given objective, reliable, and easily accessible information with regard to the results of its work;
- (h) Provide information, expertise, advice, and risk assessment to local government units in the control and prevention of communicable diseases;
- (i) Assist local government units in the control of a broad range of communicable diseases;
- (j) Formulate an early warning and response system to make available information for the general public;
- (k) Confront global disease threats through advanced computing and laboratory analysis of data to quickly find solutions to the same;
- (l) Maintain the database for epidemiological surveillance;

- (m) Provide independent scientific opinions, expert advice, data and information;
- (n) Promote and initiate scientific studies necessary for the prevention and control of communicable diseases;
- (o) Submit to Congress an annual evaluation of the current and emerging threats to health in the country.

SECTION 5. *Early Warning and Response System.* – The CDC shall operate an Early Warning and Response System which will ensure that the national government and local government units are able to respond in a timely and coordinated manner to emerging health threats in the country.

The CDC shall take action to ensure that the early warning and response system is efficiently and effectively linked with other forms of community alert systems.

SECTION 6. *Obligation of Local Government Units.* – Local government units must provide the CDC in a timely manner available health and technical data relevant to the prevention and control of communicable diseases.

SECTION 7. *Transfer of Agencies and Personnel.* – The following offices and agencies are hereby abolished and their powers and functions, applicable funds and appropriations, records, equipment, property, and personnel transferred to the CDC:

- (a) Infectious Diseases for Elimination Division (under the Disease Prevention and Control Bureau of the Department of Health);
- (b) Infectious Diseases for Prevention and Control Division (under the Disease Prevention and Control Bureau of the Department of Health);
- (c) The Epidemiological Bureau of the Department of Health; and
- (d) The Research Institute of Tropical Medicine.

SECTION 8. *Executive Director.* – The CDC shall be headed by an Executive Director, with the rank of Undersecretary, who shall be appointed by the President on the basis of technical expertise, academic background, and appropriate work experience.

The Executive Director shall perform the following functions and powers:

- (a) Manage and direct the activities of the Philippine Center for Disease Control and Prevention;
- (b) Coordinate CDC response to health emergencies;

- (c) Certify to the existence of an epidemic, which shall be treated as a public health emergency;
- (d) Recommend to the President the exercise of special powers in case of confirmation as to the existence of an epidemic;
- (e) Coordinate local and international health activities relating to disease prevention and control;
- (f) Liaise with other government agencies, international organizations, including the World Health Organization, learning institutions, and other relevant outside groups; and
- (g) Appoint employees of the CDC in accordance with the Civil Service Law, and other relevant rules and regulations.

SECTION 9. *Organizational Structure.* – The Secretary of the Department of Health, in consultation with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), shall determine the organizational structure, qualification standards, staffing pattern, and compensation of the newly created CDC, in accordance with existing laws, rules, and regulations.

SECTION 10. *Appropriations.* – The amount needed for the initial implementation of this Act shall be taken from the current fiscal year's appropriation of the offices and agency herein absorbed by the CDC. Thereafter, the amount needed for the operation and maintenance of the CDC shall be included under the Department of Health in the General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 11. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 12. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, orders, rules and regulations, other issuances, or part thereof, inconsistent with any provision of this Act, are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 13. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,