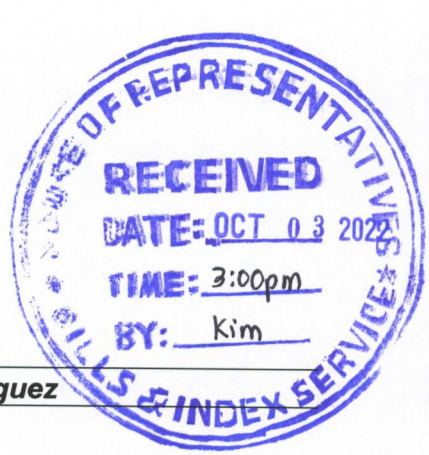
NINETEENTH CONGRESS)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Introduced by Representative Rufus B. Rodriguez

House Bill No. 5349

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article 2, Section 15 provides:

> *"The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them."*

Hepatitis C is a blood-borne pathogen that is a major cause of chronic liver disease, which according to the American Liver Foundation, is common among emergency response employees and volunteers due to the unique nature of their jobs.

Since there is no known cure for hepatitis C, the government should expend efforts to prevent emergency response employees from getting infected with the disease.

Hence, this bill seeks to provide for a study to determine the prevalence of hepatitis C among firefighters, paramedics, emergency medical technicians and other emergency response employees and undertake demonstration projects to provide training, testing, and treatment regarding cases of the disease among such employees and volunteers.

RUFUS B. RODRIGUEZ

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AN ACT
TO PROVIDE FOR A STUDY AND FOR DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS REGARDING CASES OF HEPATITIS C AMONG FIREFIGHTERS, PARAMEDICS, EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIANS AND OTHER EMERGENCY RESPONSE EMPLOYEES

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 "***Emergency Response Employees Disease Protection Act."***

SEC 2. ***Study and Demonstration Projects Regarding Cases of Hepatitis C among certain emergency response employees.*** –

(A) Study Regarding Prevalence Among Certain Emergency Response Employees -

(1) ***In General*** - The Secretary of Health (referred to in this Act as the "Secretary"), in consultation with the Secretary of Labor and Employment, shall conduct a study to determine –

(a) an estimate of the prevalence of hepatitis C among designated emergency response employees; and
(b) the likely means through which such employees become infected with such disease in the course of performing their duties as such employees.

(2) ***Designated Emergency Response Employees*** - For purposes of this section, the term "designated emergency response employees" means firefighters, paramedics, and emergency medical technicians.

(3) ***Submission of Completion Report to Congress*** - The Secretary shall commence the study under paragraph (1) not later than ninety (90) days after the date of the enactment of this Act. Not later that one (1) year after such date, the Secretary shall complete the study and submit to the Congress a report describing the findings of the study and the recommendations of the Secretary for administrative or legislative initiatives regarding the activities described in paragraph (1).

(4) ***Demonstration Projects Regarding Training and Treatment*** – The Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Labor, shall carry out each of the following activities:

a) Training designated emergency response employees in minimizing the risk of infection with hepatitis C in performing their duties as such employees.

b) Testing such employees for infection with the disease.

c) Treating the employees for the disease.

(5) ***Evaluation*** - The Secretary shall provide for an evaluation of each demonstration project under paragraph (1) in order to determine the extent to which the project has been effective in carrying out the activities described in such paragraph.

SEC *3. Authorization of Appropriations.* - The appropriation of such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act is hereby authorized.

SEC 4. *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 *5. 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 this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SEC 6. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,