



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



Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3

**Introduced by Representatives Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez,
Andrew Julian K. Romualdez and Jude A. Acidre**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to create the Philippine Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) to serve as the principal agency tasked with developing and implementing communicable disease prevention and control initiatives.

Section 15, Article II of the 1987 Constitution provides that “*The State shall protect and promote the right to health of every Filipino and instill health consciousness among them.*” The State recognizes its duty to give utmost priority to public health measures, particularly with the continuing emergence and reemergence of infectious diseases that pose significant threats to nations worldwide.

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the vital importance of effective disease prevention and control mechanisms and robust public health infrastructure. The pandemic revealed the deficiencies in the Philippines’ health system, particularly in the areas of disease surveillance, outbreak response, coordination, and data-driven policy-making. To prepare the country from future health threats, it is imperative to institutionalize reforms that will strengthen our capacity to protect public health.

Currently, the Philippines lacks a dedicated, centralized agency solely focused on disease prevention and control. While the Department of Health (DOH) performs

this function through various bureaus and offices, these efforts are often fragmented, under-resourced, and challenged by institutional constraints. The establishment of a specialized institution will allow for more coherent, responsive, and science-based approaches to disease management.

The proposed Philippine Centers for Disease Prevention and Control shall be responsible for controlling the spread of infectious diseases through the adoption of a framework that fosters a whole-of-government, whole-of-system approach and streamlining of science-based decision-making, particularly during public health emergencies.

Investing in disease prevention and control is both a public health and an economic necessity. Institutionalizing this agency will not only enhance the country's preparedness for future pandemics, but will also strengthen its capacity to address ongoing health challenges such as tuberculosis, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), dengue, and non-communicable diseases. Moreover, a centralized body will enable faster response times, more efficient resource utilization, and improved health outcomes for the Filipino people.

During the 19th Congress, Representative Ciriaco "Doc" Gato Jr., Rep. Patrick Michael D. Vargas, and Rep. Joey Salceda, were among the principal authors of the House Bills creating the Philippine Centers for Disease Prevention and Control. These proposals were later consolidated into House Bill No. 6522, which was approved by the House and transmitted to the Senate in December 2022.

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



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**AN ACT
CREATING THE PHILIPPINE CENTERS FOR DISEASE PREVENTION
AND CONTROL, DEFINING THEIR POWERS AND FUNCTIONS AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in
Congress assembled:*

**ARTICLE I
TITLE AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- 1 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the "Philippine Centers
2 for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) Act."
- 3 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – It is the policy of the State to protect and promote
4 the right to health of all Filipinos and instill health consciousness among them. To
5 this end, the State shall adopt an integrated, comprehensive, and evidence-
6 informed approach consistent with the direction enunciated under Republic Act
7 (RA) No. 11223, or the Universal Health Care (UHC) Act, and adopt a framework
8 that shall foster a whole-of-system, whole-of-government, and whole-of-society
9 approach, ensuring clear delineation of tasks between existing agencies and
10 maximizing current mandates. The State shall also allot the necessary support and
11 institutional resources to provide for effective disease prevention and control
12 through a high-level public institution imbued with the capacity, competence, and
13 authority to confront global and local public health risks.

1 SEC. 3. Objectives. – The objectives of this Act are the following:

2 (a) Protect the Filipino people from the impact of all diseases of public health
3 importance;

4 (b) Develop policies, plans, and protocols to improve on all identified areas in
5 the International Health Regulations (IHR) hazards;

6 (c) Clarify governance, decision-making, communication, and coordination
7 processes and protocols related to identifying, diagnosing, forecasting,
8 preventing, controlling, eliminating and eradicating, and monitoring diseases of
9 public health importance;

(d) Ensure swift, coordinated, and data-driven surveillance and response through the Department of Health (DOH), Epidemiology and Surveillance Units (ESUs), public health laboratory systems, points of entry, and Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) system;

10
11 (e) Provide the overall national framework and strategic direction for the
12 establishment of a health laboratory system;

13 (f) Maintain a pool of in-house experts that shall serve as the technical authority
14 who shall provide evidence-informed guidance on standards, technologies, and
15 analytics for epidemiology, disease control, prevention, elimination, eradication,
16 health emergency preparedness and response; and

17 (g) Ensure the development and implementation of a shared risk and crisis
18 communication plan with the DOH and the Food and Drug Administration
19 (FDA).

ARTICLE II

DEFINITION OF TERMS

22 SEC. 4. Definition of Terms. – As used in this Act:

(a) *Commodities for public health emergencies* refer to health products necessary for the public health emergency response. It may include vaccines, therapeutics, medical devices, and ancillary supplies;

26 (b) *Disease* refers to pathologic acute or rapidly developing and chronic or
27 long-standing conditions that cause harmful deviations from normal structure or
28 function and may be due to infectious agents or their toxic products, which may
29 be transmitted from a reservoir to a susceptible host, either directly from an
30 infected person or animal or indirectly through the agency of an intermediate

1 plant or animal host, vector, or the inanimate environment, or coming from
2 laboratories intentionally or unintentionally, or may be the result of a
3 combination of genetic, physiological, environmental, and behavioral factors;

4 (c) *Disease control* refers to the reduction of disease incidence, prevalence,
5 morbidity, or mortality to a locally acceptable level as a result of deliberate
6 efforts and continued intervention measures to maintain the reduction;

7 (d) *Disease surveillance* refers to the ongoing systematic collection, analysis,
8 interpretation, and dissemination of outcome-specific data for use in the
9 planning, implementation, and evaluation of public health practice in terms of
10 epidemics, emergencies, and disasters. A disease surveillance system includes
11 the functional capacity for data analysis as well as the timely dissemination of
12 these data to persons who can undertake effective prevention and control
13 activities;

14 (e) *Emerging or re-emerging infectious diseases* refer to diseases that are
15 characterized by the following traits:

- 16 1. have not occurred in humans before;
- 17 2. have occurred previously but affected only small numbers of people in
18 isolated areas;
- 19 3. are caused by previously undetected or unknown infectious agents;
- 20 4. are due to mutant or resistant strains of a causative organism; or
- 21 5. were once major health problems in the country, and then declined
22 dramatically, but are again becoming health problems for a significant
23 proportion of the population.

24 (f) *Epidemiological investigation* refers to an inquiry to the incidence, prevalence,
25 extent, source, mode of transmission, causation of, and other information
26 pertinent to a disease occurrence;

27 (g) *Health research* refers to research or research-related activities that seek to
28 provide timely and quality evidence to address knowledge gaps on areas related
29 to identifying, diagnosing, forecasting, preventing, controlling, eliminating and
30 eradicating, and monitoring diseases of public health importance;

31 (h) *International health regulations (IHR)* refer to an international agreement
32 managed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and focused on addressing
33 serious public health threats that have the potential to spread beyond a country's

1 borders to other parts of the world and define the standards that countries must
2 meet to be able to prevent, detect, and respond to public health threats;

3 (i) *Notifiable disease* refers to a disease that, by legal requirements, must be
4 reported to the public health authorities;

5 (j) *Public health emergency* refers to an occurrence or imminent threat of an illness
6 or health condition that:

7 1. Is caused by any of the following:

8 i. Bioterrorism;

9 ii. Appearance of a novel or previously controlled or eradicated infectious
10 agent or biological toxin;

11 iii. Natural disaster;

12 iv. Chemical attack or accidental release;

13 v. Nuclear attack or accident; or

14 vi. Attack that uses or is caused by an accidental release of radioactive
15 materials; and

16 2. Poses a high probability of any of the following:

17 i. Large number of deaths in the affected population;

18 ii. Large number of serious injuries or long-term disabilities in the affected
19 population;

20 iii. Widespread exposure to an infectious or toxic agent that poses a
21 significant risk of substantial harm to a large number of people in the
22 affected population;

23 iv. International exposure to an infectious or toxic agent that poses a
24 significant risk to the health of citizens of other countries; or

25 v. Trade and travel restrictions.

26 (k) *Public health event* refers to either a public health emergency or a public
27 health threat due to biological, chemical, radio-nuclear, and environmental
28 agents;

1 (1) *Public health laboratories* refer to facilities responsible for providing timely and
2 reliable diagnostic results primarily for improvement of patient outcomes,
3 disease prevention, control, surveillance, population-based interventions, and
4 outbreak emergency response. They shall perform core public health and
5 environmental activities, including reference tests for diseases of public health
6 importance;

7 (m) *Public health threat* refers to any situation or factor that may present a danger to
8 the health of the people;

9 (n) *Quarantine* refers to the restriction of activities or separation from others of
10 suspect persons who are not ill, or of suspect baggage, containers, conveyances,
11 or goods, in such a manner as to prevent the possible spread of infection or
12 contamination;

13 (o) *Response* refers to the implementation of specific activities to control the
14 further spread of infection, outbreaks, or epidemics and prevent reoccurrence. It
15 includes verification, contact tracing, rapid risk assessment, case measures,
16 treatment of patients, risk communication, the conduct of prevention activities,
17 and rehabilitation.

ARTICLE III

CREATION AND FUNCTIONS OF THE PHILIPPINE CENTERS FOR DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

SEC. 5. Creation of the Philippine Centers for Disease Prevention and Control. – There is hereby established an agency to be known as the Philippine Centers for Disease Prevention and Control, hereinafter referred to as "CDC." The CDC shall be an agency directly under the Office of the Secretary of the DOH.

SEC. 6. Functions of the CDC. – The CDC shall be the technical authority on forecasting, analysis, strategy, and standards development for the prevention and control of all diseases of public health importance and health security events, whether domestic or international in origin. The CDC shall coordinate with global CDCs and act as the national focal point of the Philippines for IHR concerns.

30 The functions of the CDC include the following:

31 (a) Develop strategies, standards, and policies for disease prevention and
32 control;

33 (b) Implement disease surveillance and field epidemiology activities;

34 (c) Perform data collection and analytics;

- 1 (d) Establish and strengthen public health laboratories;
 - 2 (e) Set standards and policies for private laboratories;
 - 3 (f) Recommend actions for public health threats to appropriate national government
4 bodies;
 - 5 (g) Lead public health and risk communications;
 - 6 (h) Conduct and manage health research and evidence synthesis;
 - 7 (i) Build local capacity for surveillance and health research;
 - 8 (j) Promote scientific integrity by ensuring that all its products are technically
9 accurate, scientifically and ethically sound, and useful to the government and
10 the intended population through the institutionalization of appropriate
11 mechanisms and bodies.
- 12 The CDC shall perform other functions as may be mandated by law or duly
13 delegated by relevant authorities, as well as those that may be necessary or
14 expedient for the performance of its functions under this Act.
- 15 The CDC shall submit annual detailed cost work plans relating to its functions to
16 the Secretary of Health (SOH) for approval.

17 **SEC. 7. Structure of the CDC. –**

- 18 (a) The CDC shall establish component centers that shall lead and coordinate
19 the major functions of the CDC and in this capacity, establish strategic linkages
20 and partnerships to fulfill the stated functions. In line with their functions, each
21 of the following component centers shall be headed by a Deputy Director
22 General:
 - 23 1. Center for Health Statistics (CHS). The CHS shall provide the national
24 leadership data analytics and health information systems management
25 services in the conduct of non-epidemiologic surveys in coordination with
26 the Philippine Statistics Authority, and shall complement the roles and
27 responsibilities of the DOH related to sectoral policy and planning by
28 providing relevant health statistics. It shall likewise progressively develop
29 and expand its methodological and analytical capacity; its use of informatics,
30 digital tools, innovations, among others; and expand its portfolio of national
31 health-related surveys to complement the national health surveys being
32 managed by other national agencies;

- 1 2. Center for Epidemiology and Surveillance (CES). The CES shall lead and
2 execute a national public health surveillance strategy and shall perform the
3 functions and obligations of the Epidemiology Bureau (EB) and the DOH
4 under Sections 5, 6, and 8 of RA No. 11332, otherwise known as the
5 “Mandatory Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Health Events of Public
6 Health Concern Act”. Further, it shall progressively enhance its
7 epidemiology and surveillance functions to further develop its overall
8 analytical capacity; to expand the scope of surveilled events and diseases; to
9 set standards for and continually expand tools for data management and
10 surveillance systems; to expand the scope of data collected; to lead in the
11 development of epidemiology and surveillance capacities for all diseases and
12 their causes, including social determinants of health; to lead in implementing
13 International Health Surveillance and IHR processes; and to expand its
14 technical expertise to include other and emerging branches and types of
15 epidemiology and relevant epidemiologically-related approaches;
- 16 3. Center for Health Evidence (CHE). The CHE shall be established to lead
17 evidence-informed policy-making for the prevention and control of all
18 diseases, through the synthesis of available evidence, the conduct of high-
19 quality health research, the development of evidence-informed strategies and
20 standards of care, the provision of scientific inputs to guide the development,
21 evaluation, and improvement of public health programs, and the development
22 of science-informed standards to address public health threats, in partnership
23 with academe, professional societies, research bodies, National Institutes of
24 Health, and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST);
- 25 4. Center for Health Laboratories (CHL). The CHL shall develop and provide
26 the overall strategic direction, policies, standards, and plans in the
27 implementation of the Philippine Health Laboratory System (PHLS) and the
28 institutionalization of stand-alone CDC public health laboratories, including
29 national reference laboratories, subnational, and regional public health
30 laboratories (RPHLs). The Philippine Health Laboratory System shall be
31 established by streamlining all diagnostic tests and surveillance of diseases of
32 public health importance into stand-alone laboratories across the nation and
33 by ensuring an effective and efficient quality management system for all
34 clinical and other health laboratories in partnership with the DOH. Further,
35 the CHL shall lead the country’s public health laboratory response for rapid
36 detection of emerging and re-emerging public health threats. It shall promote
37 and develop innovative science, technologies, and processes that support
38 CDC’s ability to protect the Philippines from health, safety, and security
39 threats, both foreign and local.

40 (b) The CDC shall also have three (3) offices directly under the Director General
41 that shall provide support to all Centers, namely:

ARTICLE IV

OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE, MANAGEMENT, AND STAFF OF THE CENTER

16 SEC. 8. Relationship with Existing Agencies and Offices. –

- 17 a) Relationship between CDC and DOH Operations. The CDC shall be an agency
18 under the Office of the SOH. The DOH shall develop operational and
19 intersectoral policies to support implementation of strategies and standards
20 developed by the CDC.

21 b) Relationship between CDC and the DOH Bureau of Quarantine (BOQ). The
22 CDC shall set the standards for international health surveillance and surveillance
23 at ports of entry and coordinate with the BOQ for operational and stakeholder
24 management.

25 c) Relationship between Regional CDCs and DOH Regional Offices. The CDC
26 shall have regional counterparts of its CHL, CHS, and CES to form the Regional
27 CDCs separately from DOH Regional Offices. The DOH, through its regional
28 offices, shall work closely with CDC, through its regional CDCs to support
29 implementation of strategies and standards of the CDC.

30 d) Relationship between CDC and local government units (LGUs). LGUs shall
31 adopt and localize standards and guidelines developed by the CDC, as
32 operationalized by the DOH, in the performance of activities related to
33 disease prevention and control. Further, LGUs shall allocate funding for the

1 establishment of functional ESUs based on standards set by the DOH and as
2 provided for by law including the creation of positions for the necessary Disease
3 Surveillance Officers (DSOs) and field epidemiologists and in line with the goal
4 of building local capacity for health surveillance: Provided, That LGUs that do
5 not have the capacity to achieve these standards shall be eligible to receive
6 resource augmentation from the National Government.

7

8 **SEC. 9. Transfer of Agencies. –**

9 (a) Restructuring of Affected Offices and Units. The following offices, including
10 their administrative units, shall be restructured to ensure that the CDC and
11 DOH shall co-exist synergistically and facilitate the smooth operation of the
12 CDC.

13 1. The different units of the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM)
14 shall be absorbed in the different Centers of the CDC:

15 i. The RITM's national reference laboratories shall be absorbed by the
16 CHL;

17 ii. Its clinical research units, hospital ancillary services, and research
18 laboratory departments shall be absorbed by the CHE;

19 iii. Its biological research and manufacturing units shall be temporarily
20 absorbed by the CHE until an agency is finally tasked by the
21 government to handle their role and functions.

22 2. The Health Laboratory Division, also referred to as the Office for Health
23 Laboratories of the Health Facility Development Bureau of the DOH and
24 other identified national reference laboratories shall be absorbed by the
25 CHL.

26 3. The Epidemiology Bureau (EB) shall be transferred to the CHS and CES in
27 phases. All previous functions of the EB and all disease and public health
28 surveillance functions assigned to the DOH by law shall likewise be
29 transferred to the CES. In line with this, all Regional Epidemiology and
30 Surveillance Units and Field Health Service Information System Units of the
31 DOH Regional Offices shall be transferred to and placed under the sole
32 supervision and control of the Regional CDCs upon the effective transfer of
33 the EB to the CDC.

34 i. The Knowledge Management and Information Technology Service of
35 the DOH shall restructure and rationalize its functions to eliminate or
36 minimize overlaps in and duplication of the standards and sectoral policy
37 function of the CHS.

1 ii. The CES shall set the standards for international health surveillance and
2 surveillance at ports of entry and shall coordinate with the BOQ for
3 operational and stakeholder management. Further, the screening and
4 quarantine processes for inbound and outbound international travelers as
5 provided for in Sections 4 and 5 of RA No. 9271 or the "Quarantine Act
6 of 2004" shall remain with BOQ, aligned to the standards promulgated
7 by CDC.

8 4. The Disease Prevention and Control Bureau (DPCB) shall be transformed
9 into the Public Health Strategy and Management Bureau, and shall be
10 responsible for developing operational strategy and guidelines that are
11 aligned with CDC's standards, setting up intersectoral collaboration
12 platforms, and ensuring strategic management of national health programs.
13 The DPCB's previous standards development function shall be transferred
14 to the CDC's CHE. The DOH Undersecretary for Operations and the DOH
15 Regional Offices shall continue to perform their roles in operational
16 planning, coordination and performance management.

17 5. The Communications Office of the DOH shall be a shared service among all
18 DOH offices, including the FDA and CDC, and shall perform the following
19 functions:

- 20 i. Develop strategic communication plans, including, but not limited to,
21 corporate risk and crisis communication plans;
- 22 ii. Manage and implement risk communication activities and initiatives,
23 such as the development and issuance of information and education
24 communication materials, events, stakeholder meetings, and other media
25 engagement activities;
- 26 iii. Manage and activate crisis communication protocol for health risks and
27 hazards, and institutional reputational risks;
- 28 iv. Develop and implement corresponding capacity-building activities in
29 relation to corporate risk and crisis communications;
- 30 v. Perform internal communication functions within the institution;
- 31 vi. Develop and facilitate the approval of communication materials and
32 policies as aligned with the approved communication plans;

1 vii. Manage different platforms of the institution for release of
2 communication materials; and

3 viii. Foster, maintain, and continuously build external partnerships and
4 communication networks with public and private health institutions.

5 b) Transfer of Human Resource and Material. The offices affected by the transfer
6 of agencies shall also transfer human resource, applicable funds and
7 appropriations, records, equipment, and property to the CDC subject to a multi-
8 year transition plan.

9 1. As a result of the reorganization under this Act, the DOH shall evaluate the
10 credentials, skills, and work experience of all employees in affected
11 offices/bureaus and shall conduct matching to positions within the new
12 offices/bureaus created based on the set qualification standards. The
13 Department shall develop a technical working group to ensure that RA
14 6656, entitled "An Act to Protect the Security Tenure of Civil Service
15 Officers and Employees in the Implementation of Government
16 Reorganization", shall be properly observed towards the protection of
17 tenure of affected employees and shall institute mechanisms for retooling.
18 There shall be no diminution of salaries and benefits of affected employees.
19 Affected employees may opt for voluntary separation from service within
20 six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act and shall be entitled to
21 receive separation, and early retirement benefits and other benefits under
22 applicable laws and issuances such as RA No. 6656 within ninety (90) days
23 from the date of effectivity of their separation. Provided they are not
24 entitled to said benefits, employees concerned shall be paid a separation
25 gratuity in the amount equivalent to one (1) month salary for every year of
26 service;

27
28 2. The CDC shall employ scientific, technical, and non-technical staff, where
29 a compensation and accountability mechanism shall be created for all in-
30 house experts employed in highly technical positions. Correspondingly, the
31 DOH shall determine the organization and plantilla of the CDC in
32 accordance with the salary and compensation for positions developed for
33 the CDC to the DBM for review and approval.

34 i. The salary and compensation of all employed staff under managerial,
35 technical, and administrative positions shall be subject to existing
36 compensation and position classification system and prevailing
37 qualification standards and regulations of the Civil Service
38 Commission (CSC).

39 ii. The compensation mechanism for the expert pool shall be in
40 accordance with the rules and regulations in this Act and its IRR and

1 shall be exempt from existing qualification standards and regulations
2 of the CSC

- 3 iii. All in-house experts shall be allowed to practice their profession and
4 receive additional compensation from such engagements.
- 5 iv. All employed staff and in-house experts shall submit a declaration of
6 conflict-of-interest (COI), a non-disclosure agreement (NDA), and
7 other pertinent documents requirements as may be deemed necessary.
- 8 3. The transfer of human resource, applicable funds and appropriations,
9 records, equipment, and property to the CDC, among others, shall
10 commence within two (2) years from effectivity of this Act to enable the
11 smooth transfer of the same from the DOH.

12 **SEC. 10. Structure and Staffing Pattern.** – Subject to the review and approval
13 of the DBM, the SOH shall determine the organizational structure and staffing
14 pattern of the CDC, in accordance with existing civil service laws, rules and
15 regulations.

16 **SEC. 11. Director General (DG), Deputy Directors General, and Directors.** –

17 (a) Appointment of the Director General (DG). The CDC shall be headed by a
18 DG who shall hold the rank of Undersecretary. The DG shall be appointed by
19 the President, upon the recommendation of the SOH, based on technical
20 expertise, academic background, and appropriate work experience.

21 (b) Appointment of the Deputy Directors General. The DG shall be assisted by
22 Deputy Directors General who shall hold the rank of Assistant Secretary. They
23 shall oversee the performance of the Offices and Centers and any additional
24 offices created in accordance with Sec. 7 (d) of this Act. The Deputy Directors
25 General shall likewise be appointed by the President, upon the recommendation
26 of the SOH, based on technical expertise, academic background, and appropriate
27 work experience.

28 (c) Appointment of Directors. The DG shall likewise be assisted by the following:

- 29 1. Director for Health Economics Service with the rank of Director IV;
30 2. Director for Policy and Planning with the rank of Director IV;
31 3. Director for Administration, Finance, and Legal Affairs with the rank of
32 Director IV;

33 (d) Qualifications and Eligibilities.

1. The DG shall be a public health professional, must be a licensed medical doctor, with at least 15 years of combined post-graduate work experience in relevant fields of medicine, public health, research, and management.
 2. The Deputy Director General of each Center shall possess a postgraduate degree, preferably a doctorate degree in fields related to medicine, public health, or research, with management experience in such fields. and
 3. The Directors directly under the Office of the DG shall possess third level service eligibility with educational background in relevant fields of medicine, public health, accounting, management, economics or any business course, and must have management experience in the aforesaid fields.

(e) Powers and Functions of the Director General.

1. Provide leadership, policy guidance, coordination, technical expertise, and services to promote the development and implementation of the CDC's national programs;
 2. Certify to the SOH the presence of a public health emergency;
 3. Notify the WHO and other focal points of any public health emergency or incident in accordance with IHR guidelines, and coordinate public health response with the WHO, IHR and national focal points;
 4. Recommend to the President, through the SOH, the exercise of special powers in the case of public health emergencies, including mobilization of the governmental and nongovernmental agencies, including the private sector, to respond to the threat in performing the following functions:
 - i. Develop and implement national policies to prevent and mitigate further transmission of diseases of public health importance;
 - ii. Ensure that LGUs follow all rules, regulations, and directives issued by the National Government pursuant to this Act: *Provided*, That all LGUs are authorized to develop localized policies and interventions provided these are aligned with national policy, rules and regulations;
 - iii. Develop and implement flexibilities in procurement of essential commodities and implement programs in response to a public health emergency;
 - iv. Ensure the adequate and equitable distribution of health workers during public health emergencies and the provision of social benefits and

1 protection to health workers and their families and other household
2 members against discrimination;

- 3 v. Enforce measures to protect the people from hoarding, profiteering,
4 injurious speculations, manipulation of prices, product deceptions,
5 monopolistic practices, other acts in restraint of trade, or other
6 pernicious practices affecting the supply, distribution, and movement
7 of food, clothing, hygiene and sanitation products, medicines and
8 medical supplies devices, implements, machinery, equipment and spare
9 parts required in agriculture, industry, other essential services, and
10 other articles of prime necessity, whether imported or locally produced
11 or manufactured;
- 12 vi. Ensure that donations intended to address the public health
13 emergencies, the acceptance thereof, and distribution of donated health
14 products and commodities are not unnecessarily delayed considering
15 their shelf-life, and that health products for donation that are duly
16 certified by the national regulatory authorities (NRA) or their
17 accredited third party representatives from countries with established
18 regulations shall be automatically cleared; and
- 19 vii. Perform such other functions and activities, as deemed necessary.

20 5. Institute public health surveillance programs in accordance with RA 11332
21 and as such, impose the following:

- 22 i) All public and private hospitals, clinics, health facilities, laboratories,
23 institutions, workplaces, schools, prisons, ports, airports, establishments,
24 communities, other government agencies, and non-governmental
25 organizations are required to accurately and immediately report notifiable
26 disease and public health events to CDC;
- 27 ii) All public and private hospitals, clinics, health facilities, laboratories shall
28 be required to submit health and health-related data, which shall include
29 administrative, public health, medical, pharmaceutical, and financing data
30 to the CDC;
- 31 i) DSOs, ESUs, CDC laboratories, PHLs, pharmacies and those employed
32 by the LGUs to perform surveillance and response activities shall furnish
33 information required by the CDC at all times and as soon as practicable;
34 and
- 35 iv) Failure of said establishments to report to the CDC shall constitute a
36 violation of Section 9, paragraphs (d) and (e) of Republic Act No. 11332,

1 or the "Mandatory Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Health Events of
2 Public Health Concern Act."

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6. Issue an order requiring any person or institution to furnish CDC any sample of any substance or matter in the possession or control of that person, whether taken pursuant to this Act or otherwise, as may be considered necessary or appropriate, or any information as may be required by the CDC, within the period it requires for the purpose of any public health surveillance program, epidemiological investigation, or survey conducted pursuant to this Act;
 7. Request the Philippine National Police or the National Bureau of Investigation to locate any patients or persons suspected of contracting a communicable disease;
 8. Certify the termination of a public health emergency which may serve as basis for the de-escalation and eventual termination of emergency response activities;
 9. Develop policies with provisions on penalties for local implementation and enforcement:
 - i. The Director General, upon consultation with the SOH, shall provide recommendations on the corresponding rules and regulations, as well as penalties, for local implementation and enforcement that are necessary to control and prevent diseases within the country and to prevent the introduction, transmission, or spread of communicable diseases from other countries into the Philippines or from one domestic seaport/airport to another; and
 - ii. For purposes of implementing these regulations, the Director General upon consultation with the SOH, shall provide public health preventive measures and intervention strategies such as health education, promotion, and advisories, isolation, veterinary and plant quarantine, inspections, fumigation, disinfection, disinfestation, vector control, pest extermination, and destruction of animals or articles found to be infected or contaminated as to be sources of infection to human beings, in coordination with other concerned quarantine agencies and other measures as may be necessary.
 10. Develop containment strategies for inland contagion or community transmission of public health threats and shall coordinate these with the SOH. During public health emergencies, the DOH Health Emergency Management Bureau shall coordinate with DOH BOQ in controlling, directing, and managing all quarantine stations, grounds, and anchorages,

1 and in designating their boundaries in accordance with Section 6 of RA No.
2 9271, or the “Quarantine Act of 2004”;

- 3 11. Provide or obtain technical assistance for regional and local health
4 departments, private agencies, and international and supranational agencies
5 before, during, and after public health emergencies;
- 6 12. Develop a shared risk communication plan in coordination with the DOH
7 and the FDA;
- 8 13. Liaise with other government agencies, NGOs, international organizations,
9 including the WHO, learning and academic institutions, and other pertinent
10 groups or entities in the conduct of activities relating to disease prevention
11 and control;
- 12 14. Coordinate with appropriate DOH Offices regarding administrative and
13 program matters;
- 14 15. Appoint eligible persons in accordance with civil service laws, rules and
15 regulations, and this Act;
- 16 16. Delegate the powers vested under this Act to the Deputy Directors General;
17 and
- 18 17. Perform such other functions as may be mandated by law, or as may be
19 delegated by the SOH or the President.

20 **ARTICLE V**
21 **RESPONSE ACTION**

22 **SEC. 12. Response Cascade.** – In case of public health emergencies due to biological,
23 chemical, and toxic events:

- 24 (a) The CDC shall, through the CHE, prepare and disseminate to the public and
25 private sector the relevant technical information and guidance;
- 26 (b) The DOH shall, through the PHSMB, develop operational and intersectoral
27 strategies guided by the strategies and standards developed by the CDC;
- 28 (c) The DOH shall, through its regional offices, work closely with CDC,
29 through its regional CDCs to immediately respond to the public health
30 emergency. When necessary, the DOH shall tap into the DRRM system to
31 effectively respond to public health emergencies;

- 1 (d) The CHL shall activate the public health laboratory response network and
2 continuously provide guidance for core laboratory programs in quality
3 management, laboratory medicine and safety and security programs, laboratory
4 information management and surveillance, research and development and
5 training;
- 6 (e) The CES shall certify to the veracity of the official data to be used as basis
7 for response and for public reporting, and provide standards and overall
8 guidance to the BOQ for the institution of disease surveillance at all points of
9 entry and exit;
- 10 (f) The National Telecommunications Commission and any telecommunications
11 entity as defined under RA No. 7925 or the "Public Telecommunications Policy
12 Act of the Philippines," shall provide location information of patients or persons
13 suspected of contracting a disease upon request of the CDC: *Provided*, That the
14 CDC shall ensure confidentiality of such information;
- 15 (g) The Secretary of Health may undertake the following functions in case of
16 public health events;
- 17 1) Hiring, transfer, and deployment of health personnel;
- 18 2) Implementation of whole-of-government and whole-of-society public health
19 emergency preparedness and response in cooperation with the Department of
20 the Interior and Local Government, LGUs, and private sector;
- 21 3) Strict enforcement and augmentation of border control and surveillance in
22 coordination with the Department of Foreign Affairs, DOH-BOQ, Bureau of
23 Immigration, Philippine Ports Authority, Department of Agriculture, and
24 Bureau of Customs;
- 25 4) Commissioning of research in coordination with DOST;
- 26 5) Promotion of the treatment of, vaccination, or immunization against a
27 contagious disease, compelling the isolation or quarantine of persons who are
28 unable or unwilling, for reasons of health, religion, or conscience, to undergo
29 immunization or treatment: *Provided*, That the guidelines for the exercise of
30 such power shall be formulated in coordination with the Department of
31 Justice;
- 32 6) Decontamination of any facility or decontamination or destruction of any
33 material when the CDC reasonably suspects that such facility or material may
34 endanger public health, subject to just compensation;

- 7) Issuance and enforcement of measures for safe handling and disposal of human and animal remains; and
 - 8) Requiring any health or funeral facility authorized by law to perform such services as are reasonable and necessary to respond to a public health emergency.

ARTICLE VI

SPECIAL POWERS / AUTHORITY TO ENABLE RESPONSE

SEC. 13. Authority for Other Professions to Administer, Dispense, and Provide Commodities for Public Health Emergencies. – In addition to physicians, other health and allied medical professionals such as pharmacists and midwives who are duly trained by the DOH or its authorized representatives may dispense and administer commodities considered as vital for public health emergencies with special authorization or regular certificate of registration from the FDA notwithstanding any law to the contrary.

15 SEC. 14. Issuance of Special Regulatory Authorizations. – Pursuant to Section
16 4 of Republic Act No. 3720, or the “Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act”, as amended
17 by Republic Act No. 9711 or the "Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Act of
18 2009," the FDA shall be given authority to issue special authorizations for
19 commodities for public health emergencies. *Provided*. That:

20 (a) Based on the totality of available scientific evidence, including data from
21 adequate and well-documented controlled trials, it is reasonable to believe that
22 the health product may be effective to prevent, diagnose, or treat the diseases of
23 concern:

24 (b) The potential benefits of the health product when used to diagnose, prevent,
25 or treat diseases of concern outweigh the known and potential risks, if any; and

26 (c) There is no adequate, approved, and available alternative to the health
27 product for diagnosing, preventing, or treating disease/s of concern.

28 In the event that the declared public health emergency is lifted, special
29 authorizations issued by the FDA shall have provisional validity for a period of
30 one year (1) from the date of lifting of the declaration for the sole purpose of
31 exhausting remaining supplies.

32 Distribution and administration of unauthorized commodities for public health
33 emergency shall be prohibited.

SEC. 15. Health Technology Assessment and Evidence Review. – The requirement for a Health Technology Assessment (HTA) shall not be a prerequisite

1 to procurement of commodities for public health emergencies as an exemption to
2 Section 34 of the RA 11223. Further, the HTA shall not be required for:

- 3 (a) Donated health products;
- 4 (b) Unregistered commodities for public health emergency which are qualified
5 for compassionate use according to the guidelines set by the FDA; and
- 6 (c) Repurposing or stock realignment of commodities for public health
7 emergencies that have already been procured by the DOH, LGUs, private sector
8 entities: *Provided*, That repurposing or stock realignment shall be in accordance
9 with the indication of its use as approved by the FDA.

10 The DOH, FDA, Health Technology Assessment Council (HTAC), and other
11 relevant offices shall, without need for notice or demand, immediately provide
12 each other with any and all information, including proprietary submissions of data
13 by manufacturers, traders, distributors, or other sources, for the purpose of
14 expediting the review of the evidence, product authorization or registration, and
15 the appropriate release of recommendations and supporting policies: *Provided*,
16 That a non-disclosure agreement among all parties involved shall be executed and
17 enforced prior to the sharing of the said information.

18 **SEC. 16. Procurement of Commodities and Services for Public Health**
19 **Emergencies by the DOH.** – The DOH and authorized parties such as the LGUs
20 and private entities shall be allowed to procure commodities for public health
21 emergencies that are recommended by any of the following:

- 22 (a) WHO;
- 23 (b) HTAC;
- 24 (c) DOH-approved clinical practice guidelines or interim guidelines; or
- 25 (d) Similar emergency authorizations from other stringent NRAs.

26 For the purposes of this provision, the DOH and authorized parties may
27 immediately enter into alternative modes of expedited procurement with United
28 Nations agencies, international organizations, or international financing
29 institutions and their operational arms, such as the WHO, United Nations Office
30 for Project Services, and United Nations Children's Fund, subject to the rules and
31 policies set by the DOH.

32 Section 88 of Presidential Decree No. 1445, as amended, otherwise known as the
33 “Government Auditing Code of the Philippines”, and any law to the contrary
34 notwithstanding, the DOH may disburse funds as advance payment if required by

1 the manufacturer, trader, or distributor: *Provided*, That the authority to advance
2 payment shall be for the procurement of commodities for public health
3 emergencies and to secure other goods and services necessary for their storage,
4 transport, deployment, and administration.

5 Distribution and administration of unauthorized commodities for public health
6 emergencies shall be prohibited.

7 **SEC. 17. Donation of Excess Supply of Commodities.** – In case of an excess
8 supply of commodities as may be determined by the DOH, the DOH may donate
9 them to other LGUs, bureaus, agencies, instrumentalities, or private entities. The
10 national government, led by the DFA, in coordination with the DOH, may also
11 donate the excess supply to other countries: *Provided*, That the DOH, DBM, and
12 Commission on Audit shall issue separate operational guidelines that set forth
13 expedited procedures to facilitate the receipt and acceptance of any donations
14 pursuant to this provision, any law to the contrary notwithstanding.

15 **SEC. 18. Authority to Direct the Operations of Private Establishments During**
16 **Public Health Emergencies.** – The President, during public health emergencies,
17 may direct the operations of any privately-owned establishment including, among
18 others, hospitals and medical and health facilities, passenger vessels, and other
19 private enterprises, to perform functions and provide support services for public
20 health emergency response, including housing health workers serving in
21 quarantine areas, quarantine centers, medical relief and aid distribution locations,
22 or other temporary medical facilities, and ferrying health, emergency, and frontline
23 personnel: *Provided*, That the management and operation of such establishments
24 shall be retained by the owners: *Provided, further*, That reasonable compensation
25 for any additional damage or costs incurred by the owner or the possessor of the
26 subject property solely on account of complying with the directive shall be given
27 to the person entitled to the possession of such private properties or businesses after
28 the conditions have stabilized or at the soonest time practicable.

29 **SEC. 19. Transition to Regular Authorization.** – For this purpose, the FDA shall
30 be given authority to develop specific guidelines on the transition of the regulatory
31 authorization of commodities for public health emergencies from special use
32 authorization to regular certificate of registration. This is in consideration of the
33 time needed to process applications and to avoid a monopoly by a single supplier
34 of health products for public health emergencies. The granting of a regular
35 certificate of registration by the Philippine FDA to the first brand deemed suitable
36 for such registration shall not immediately revoke all other special authorizations
37 granted by the FDA to other brands, any law to the contrary notwithstanding:
38 *Provided*, That once the DOH and the FDA had determined that the suppliers
39 granted with regular certificate of registration have enough capacity to supply the
40 country's projected needs, all other special authorizations issued shall be deemed
41 revoked by this Act, without prejudice to their holders completing the process to

1 obtain a regular certificate of registration: *Provided, further,* That remaining stocks
2 covered by a special authorization that has been revoked pursuant to this provision,
3 but which still have a valid shelf life, shall either be donated to a country where its
4 use is still authorized by its NRA, or held in storage until it is disposed of
5 appropriately upon the termination of its shelf-life.

6 **SEC. 20. Authority for Other Professions to Administer, Dispense, and**
7 **Provide Commodities for Public Health Emergencies.** – In addition to
8 physicians, other health and allied medical professionals such as pharmacists and
9 midwives who are duly trained by the DOH or its authorized representatives may
10 administer, dispense and provide commodities for public health emergencies with
11 special authorization or regular certificate of registration from the FDA.

12 **SEC. 21. Immunity from Liability.** – Notwithstanding any law to the contrary,
13 program implementers, public officials and employees, health care workers and
14 non-health care workers, whether public or private who are authorized to carry out
15 and are actually carrying out the public health emergency response shall be
16 immune from suit and liability under Philippine laws with respect to all claims
17 arising out of, related to, or resulting from the administration or use of commodities
18 and counter measures under the public health emergency response and in the
19 discharge of the authorized person's official duties, except those arising from
20 willful misconduct and gross negligence.

21 The members of the FDA and the National Adverse Events Following
22 Immunization and its regional counterparts during the conduct of monitoring for
23 probable adverse effects from the commodities for public health emergency shall
24 similarly enjoy the privileges given under this section, unless the said members'
25 actions are tantamount to gross negligence or willful misconduct.

26 **ARTICLE VIII**
27 **MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

28 **SEC. 22. Intergovernmental Collaborative Activities.** – The Secretary of
29 Foreign Affairs and the SOH are jointly mandated to review and recommend to the
30 CDC multilateral and bilateral agreements which the country may adopt to
31 strengthen its collaborative mechanisms with other countries.

32 **SEC. 23. Transitory Provision.** – The CDC shall, in coordination with the DOH
33 and LGUs, craft a multi-year plan to ensure the timely implementation and
34 progressive realization of this Act. To this end, the multi-year plan shall include:

35 (a) Phased expansion of the capacity of the CDC to cover other health
36 conditions or threats in view of the needs of the Philippine health sector;

1 (b) Requiring that every province and city-wide health system have full-time
2 DSOs, without prejudice to the need for the designation of DSOs in
3 municipalities when necessary;

4 (c) Establishing Sub-National Laboratories and Regional Public Health
5 Laboratories;

6 (d) Emergency funding and procurement of commodities and hiring during
7 public health emergencies; and

8 (e) Establishment of infrastructure and acquisition of parcels of land to
9 house the national offices under the CDC.

10 The DOH shall, upon coordination with CDC, submit the funding requirements
11 with corresponding annual targets for the implementation of the multi-year plan to
12 the DBM and concerned agencies, for the determination of appropriate national
13 budget allocation: *Provided*, That in relation to their devolved functions under the
14 UHC Act and other existing laws, LGUs shall appropriate the necessary funds to
15 ensure the proper implementation of this Act.

16 **SEC. 24. Modernization Program.** – The Director General shall, in consultation
17 with the DOH and other concerned agencies of government and the private sector,
18 develop a modernization program that will strengthen the human health resource
19 of the CDC, which is the key component of the country's disease prevention and
20 control policy. The modernization program shall include the acquisition and
21 upgrading of appropriate technologies, laboratories, facilities, equipment, other
22 needed resources, and the needed relocation and acquisition of additional land or
23 location that would house the CDC.

24 Within one hundred eighty (180) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Director
25 General shall, upon the recommendation of the DOH and DBM Secretaries, submit
26 the modernization program for the consideration and approval of Congress.

27 The modernization program shall be implemented over a period of five (5) years.
28 The funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act
29 (GAA).

30 **SEC. 25. Authority to Solicit, Negotiate, and Receive Donations, Grants, Gifts,
31 Legacies, Endowments, and Contributions.** – The CDC may solicit, negotiate
32 with, and receive from any public or private domestic or foreign sources legacies,
33 gifts, donations, grants, endowments, contributions or other transfers of ownership
34 and/or possession of real or personal properties of all kinds for use in its operations
35 such as the upgrading of its facilities, equipment outlay, human resource
36 development and expansion, and the acquisition of the appropriate office space to
37 improve the delivery of its services to the public.

1 The Director General shall be authorized to retain, without need of a separate
2 approval from any government agency, and subject only to existing accounting and
3 auditing rules and regulations, all the legacies, gifts, donations, grants,
4 endowments, contributions which shall be deposited and maintained in a separate
5 account or fund in addition to the annual budget of the CDC which may be used or
6 disbursed directly by the Director General for the purpose of which the fund was
7 originally intended.

8 The Director General shall likewise be authorized to retain other transfers of
9 ownership and possession of real or personal property of all kinds solicited,
10 negotiated, and received by the CDC under this Act and other laws that it is
11 mandated to administer based on the immediately prior year of operations.

12 **SEC. 26. Tax Exemptions.** – Donations, grants, gifts, endowments, legacies, and
13 contributions used actually, directly and exclusively for the purpose of the CDC
14 shall be exempt from the donor's tax and the same shall be considered as allowable
15 deduction from gross income for purposes of computing the taxable income of the
16 donor, in accordance with Sec. (H)(2)(a) of the National Internal Revenue Code of
17 1997, as amended. Likewise, such other transfers of ownership and/or possession
18 of real or personal properties of all kinds shall be exempt from all taxes.

19 **SEC. 27. Annual Report.** – The CDC shall submit to Congress and the Office of
20 the President an annual report containing an evaluation of the current and emerging
21 threats to health in the country and the progress made with respect to IHR
22 commitments and the initiatives undertaken to address these, and
23 recommendations for legislation, if necessary.

24 **SEC. 28. Appropriations.** – The amount necessary for the initial implementation
25 of this act shall be charged against the current year appropriations of the offices
26 and agencies concerned. Thereafter, the funding requirements for the ensuing years
27 shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

28 **SEC. 29. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – The DOH shall promulgate
29 the necessary implementing rules and regulations within ninety (90) working days
30 from the effectivity of this Act.

31 **SEC. 30. Separability Clause.** – If any provision of this Act is declared
32 unconstitutional or otherwise invalid, the validity of the other provisions shall not
33 be affected thereby.

34 **SEC. 31. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations,
35 other issuances, or parts thereof, inconsistent with any provision of this Act, are
36 hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

1 **SEC. 32. Effectivity.** — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
2 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,