

*Republic of the Philippines*  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City

**SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

**HOUSE BILL NO. 3163**

<b>HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES</b>	
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Introduced by: Hon. Angelina "Helen" D.L. Tan, M.D.

**AN ACT PROVIDING POLICIES AND PRESCRIBING PROCEDURES ON SURVEILLANCE AND RESPONSE TO NOTIFIABLE DISEASES, EPIDEMICS, AND HEALTH RELATED EVENTS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 3573 ENTITLED, "AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE PREVENTION AND SUPPRESSION OF DANGEROUS COMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES", AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

The Constitution enshrines the right to health of every Filipino. Specifically, Article 2, Section 15 provides that, "The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them."

Pursuant to the foregoing provision of the fundamental law, this measure seeks to amend the archaic Republic Act 3573, otherwise known as the "Law on Reporting of Communicable Diseases", which requires all individuals and health facilities to report notifiable diseases to national and local health authorities.


Notification, by the fastest means possible, is required for the epidemic-prone diseases that newly appear in the population or have existed but are rapidly increasing in incidence. It allows for the collection of information that show how often the disease occurs, which significantly aid public health authorities identify disease trends and track disease outbreaks. Such vital information can significantly help control future outbreaks and protect public health.

For purposes of strengthening the existing legal framework for notifiable diseases, this bill seeks to ensure the establishment and maintenance of efficient and effective disease surveillance and response system that will utilize evidence-based data or research in making reports in the formulation of health policies and health advocacies on notifiable diseases.

Particularly, the bill provides for the recognition of the Philippine Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (PIDSR) System as the official system of the Department of Health in terms of disease surveillance, and as such, shall be the official information system for mandatory notification of diseases, syndromes, and other health-related events and conditions.

As such, all diseases, syndromes, and health-related events and conditions under the PIDSR, including other diseases identified by the DOH as notifiable shall be reported to national and local public health authorities, physicians, health workers, and the Philippine Medical Association.

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

  
**ANGELINA "HELEN" D.L. TAN, M.D.**  
4th District, Quezon

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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 “Mandatory Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Health-Related Events Act of 2016.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them. It shall endeavor to protect the people from public health threats through the efficient and effective disease surveillance of emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases and provide an effective response system in compliance with the 2005 International Health Regulations (IHR) of the World Health Organization (WHO). The State recognizes epidemics and other public health emergencies as threats to public health and national security, which can undermine the social, economic, and political functions of the State.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the following terms are herein defined:

a. Communicable disease means an illness due to infectious agent or its toxic products, which is transmitted, directly or indirectly, to a susceptible host from an infected person, animal, or arthropod or through the agency or an intermediate host or a vector or through the inanimate environment.

b. Disease means an illness due to a specific toxic substance, occupational exposure or infectious agent, which affects a susceptible individual, either directly or indirectly, as from an infected animal or person, or indirectly through an intermediate host, vector, or the environment.

c. Emerging infectious diseases are those that (1) have not occurred in humans before; (2) have occurred previously but affected only small numbers of people in isolated places; or (3) have occurred throughout human history but have only recently been recognized as a distinct diseases due to an infectious agent.

d. Epidemic or outbreak means an occurrence in a community or a region of case(s) of an illness(es) or other health-related events clearly in excess of normal expectancy.

e. Infectious disease means a clinically manifest disease of humans or animals resulting from an infection.

f. Investigation means an inquiry to the incidence, prevalence, extent, source, mode of transmission, causation of, and other information pertinent to a disease occurrence.

g. Non-communicable disease means an illness due to diseases resulting from prolonged exposure to causative agents, personal behavior and environmental factors.



h. Notifiable disease means a disease that, by legal requirements, must be reported to the public health authority when the diagnosis is made.

i. Public health authority means the Department of Health (specifically the National Epidemiology Center, National Center for Disease Prevention and Control, Bureau of Quarantine, Food and Drug Administration, Centers for Health Development), local health office (provincial, city or municipality), or any person directly authorized to act on behalf of the Department of Health or the local health office.

j. Public health emergency means an occurrence or imminent threat of an illness or health condition that:

1. is believed to be caused by any of the following:

- i. bioterrorism;
- ii. the appearance of a novel or previously controlled or eradicated infectious agent or biological toxin;
- iii. a natural disaster;
- iv. a chemical attack or accidental release; or
- v. a nuclear attack or accident; and

2. pose a high probability of any of the following harms:

- i. a large number of deaths in the affected population;
- ii. a large number of serious or long term disabilities in the affected populations;
- iii. widespread exposure to an infectious or toxic agent that poses a significant risk of substantial harm to large number of people in the affected population;
- iv. international spread; or
- v. result to trade and travel restrictions

k. Public health threat means any situation or factor that may represent a danger to the health of the people.

l. Re-emerging infectious diseases mean diseases that once were major health problems in the country and then declined dramatically but are once again becoming health problems for a significant proportion of the population.

m. Surveillance means the on-going systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of outcome-specific data for use in the planning, implementation and evaluation of public health practice, which includes the functional capacity for data analysis as well as the timely dissemination of these data to persons who can undertake effective prevention and control activities.

SEC. 4. *Objectives.* – This Act shall have the following objectives:

a. To continuously develop and upgrade the list of nationally notifiable diseases, health-related events and conditions with their corresponding case definitions;

b. To enforce mandatory reporting to public health authorities on diseases, bioterrorism, other health-related events and conditions designated by the State as reportable;

c. To ensure the establishment and maintenance of efficient and effective disease surveillance responsive system at the national and local levels;

d. To provide sufficient funding to support the communications technology and infrastructure needed to efficiently collect, analyze and disseminate the disease surveillance information and allow for transmission at all levels;

e. To require public and private laboratories to actively participate in disease surveillance through the following:

1. Assurance of the availability of appropriate laboratory tests and reagents and on-going technological and training support for new and classic methods of notifiable disease detection and identification of other health-related events and conditions; and

2. Establishment of linkages with clinical, veterinary, agricultural, and academic laboratories to share expertise, services and identify laboratory surge capacity for any public health emergency

f. To expand collaborations beyond traditional public health partners to include others who may be involved in the surveillance and response, such as agricultural agencies, veterinarians, law enforcement, and transportation agencies, among others;

g. To provide accurately and timely health information about notifiable diseases, health-related events and conditions to private citizens and health providers as an integral part of response to public health emergencies.

h. To establish effective mechanisms for strong collaboration with national and local government health agencies to ensure proper procedures are in place to promptly respond to notifiable disease reports, including case investigations, treatment, and control and containment, including follow-up activities;

i. To ensure that public health authorities have the statutory and regulatory authority to ensure the following:

1. Mandatory reporting of reportable diseases, health-related events and conditions;

2. Quarantine and isolation; and

3. Epidemic and/or epidemiologic investigation, rapid containment, disease control and prevention measures, case investigations, patient interviews, population surveys, review of medical records, contact tracing, and environmental investigation

j. To respect to the fullest extent possible the rights of people to liberty, bodily integrity, and privacy consistent with maintaining and preserving the public health and security

*SEC. 5. Preparation and Updating of the List of Notifiable Diseases.* – The Epidemiology Bureau under the DOH shall be responsible for the preparation and updating of the list of notifiable diseases, syndromes, and other health-related events and conditions. The selection and the deletion of diseases in the list of notifiable diseases, syndromes, and other health-related events and conditions shall be based on criteria to be established by the DOH.

*SEC. 6. Mandatory Reporting.* – The Philippine Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (PIDSR) System shall be recognized as the official system of the DOH in terms of disease surveillance, and as such, shall be the official information system for mandatory notification of items provided in Section 5 of this Act.

All diseases, syndromes, and health-related events and conditions under the PIDSR, including other diseases identified by the DOH as notifiable shall be reported to national and local public health authorities, physicians, health workers, and the Philippine Medical Association following the system flow of the respective surveillance system.

*SEC. 7. Assessment of Suspected Epidemics or Public Health Emergency.* – All suspected epidemics or public health emergency, including unofficial reports, shall be assessed by the DOH in coordination with the national agencies, local government units, and other parties directly or indirectly involved in the investigation and control of public health threats.

*SEC. 8. Verification.* – All health officers in provinces, cities and municipalities, disease surveillance officers, physicians, health workers, and the Philippine Medical Association shall promptly verify reports of epidemics received from health facilities, both government or private, in all levels of governance, or through community rumors and shall immediately notify the DOH.

*SEC. 9. Declaration of Epidemic or Public Health Emergency.* – The Secretary of Health shall have the sole authority to declare epidemics of national and/or international concerns except when the same threatens national security. In which case, the President of the Republic of the Philippines shall declare a State of Public Health Emergency and mobilize governmental and non-governmental agencies to respond to the threat.

Provincial, City or Municipal Health Offices may declare an epidemic within their respective localities provided that they have a functional surveillance system and that the declaration is supported by sufficient scientific evidence, which include surveillance information, epidemiologic investigation, environmental investigation, and laboratory investigation.

For purposes of this Act, a functional surveillance system means that the office can produce the necessary information stipulated in the respective surveillance system of the DOH.

**SEC. 10. *The Epidemiology Bureau.*** - The Epidemiology Bureau under the DOH shall have a nationwide scope of function and shall advocate for evidence-based decision-making, public health surveillance, early response and outbreak management, epidemiological research and risk assessment at all levels of health system. It shall strengthen the epidemiology programs of the country and maintain the human resources devoted to the field.

The Epidemiology Bureau shall take the lead in the investigation of epidemics of national and international importance, in coordination with the Centers for Health Development (CHDs), national agencies, local government units, and other concerned agencies.

**SEC. 11. *Establishment of Epidemiology and Surveillance Units.*** - The DOH, in coordination with the local government units, shall ensure the establishment of Epidemiology and Surveillance Units (ESUs) in all provinces, cities and municipalities throughout the country, which shall provide effective linkages between the Epidemiology Bureau and the local government units in the provision of timely, accurate, and reliable epidemiologic information from the field and facilitate capacity building in the field of epidemiology.

**SEC. 12. *Prohibited Acts.*** - The following shall be prohibited under this Act:

- a. Breach of privacy and confidentiality;
- b. Non-performance of the operations of the PIDSR; and
- c. Non-cooperation of persons or entities that should report these events to the appropriate public health authority.

**SEC. 13. *Penalties.*** - Any person or entity found to have violated Sec. 12 of this Act shall be penalized with a fine of not less than Twenty thousand Pesos (Php20,000.00) but not more than Fifty thousand pesos (Php50,000.00) or imprisonment of not less than one month, but not more than six months, or both such fine and imprisonment, at the discretion of the proper court.

If the offense is committed by a corporation, partnership other juridical entity duly organized in accordance with law, the chief executive officer, president, general manager, or such other officer in charge shall be liable for the commission of the offense penalized under this Act and the cancellation of its business permit and license to operate.

The Secretary of Health shall have the authority to impose administrative sanctions such as suspension or cancellation of license to practice profession to the Professional Regulation Commission, as the case may be, for the violation of this Act.

**SEC. 14. *Appropriations.*** - The DOH shall include in its program the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the Annual General Appropriations Act.

**SEC. 15. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** - The DOH shall issue the Implementing Rules and Regulations for this Act within one hundred twenty (120) days after the approval of this Act.

**SEC. 16. *Separability Clause.*** - If any part, section or provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

**SEC. 17. *Repealing Clause.*** - All other laws, decrees, orders, issuances, and rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed and modified accordingly.

SEC. 18. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,