

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

8
House Bill No. _____



INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE ALAN PETER "COMPAÑERO" S. CAYETANO

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL HEALTH PASSPORT SYSTEM AND STRENGTHENING THE
PRIMARY HEALTHCARE SYSTEM, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that the State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them. This is also pursuant to the constitutional mandate that the government plans and implements health and medical programs. However, this effort is hampered by the high cost of medical care and the lack of information dissemination on health issues.

While the Universal Health Care Law aims to resolve the problem of rising costs of medical expenses, ensure the availability of free diagnostic examinations, access to medical facilities, and medicines, we know that implementation may take a while and the lack of information and medical record keeping is yet to be addressed.

Medical record keeping plays an essential role in any healthcare system. For Filipinos in general, it is not usual practice to keep such documentation – whether of previous check ups, diagnostic test results, medications, treatments, and procedures done, among others. Thus assisting Filipinos in record keeping and making medical history available should also be given emphasis and priority by the government.

The Health Passport System can help address this gap as its purpose is to provide each Filipino with a document that reflects each individual's full medical history and other relevant data, providing both the medical practitioner and the patient a full picture of the latter's condition. In the event of emergencies, this will also be a handy tool that can be essential in saving lives.

Also, medical data recorded in the health passport cautions the patient to be aware of his congenital or hereditary illness consistent with the saying that to be forewarned is to be forearmed. Hence, an individual can make the necessary preparations to prevent further complication of his illness. In addition, couples will know the medical history of his or her partner and give them the chance to take steps to ensure the health of their children.

The importance of diagnostic tests may be emphasized by the fact that many suffer from misdiagnosed illnesses due to the absence of proper information. Through these tests, illnesses, medication, and other medical procedures are accurately determined. Recording of the results of these tests to one's health passport will guide physicians in making proper diagnosis, give other physicians a better perspective of the medical history of the patient, and prevent duplication of tests being done on the same patient.

To use the health passport, all the patient has to do, is to present it whenever he/she avails of the medical services of any public hospital, clinic, or other medical institutions. This document also intends to assist the doctor examining the patient's medical condition, either in private or public medical facility. However, the health passport, along with PhilHealth, will not be fully and seamlessly functional if the primary health care system is not established.

For these reasons, more than the provision of the Health Passport System, this bill's objective is to strengthen the primary healthcare system to effect change that is felt by all. Evaluation and monitoring systems will be in place to guarantee that our Rural Health Units will meet the world's standard of primary healthcare.

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



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Representative
1st District of Taguig-Pateros

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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 "*Health Passport System Act*".

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy* – It is the policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them. Free medical care shall be provided to the underprivileged and that their needs shall be prioritized.

Also, the State recognizes the need to adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development, which shall endeavour to make essential goods, health and other social services available to all the people at affordable costs.

It is also the policy of the State to fully utilize technology and use this as leverage to ensure better delivery of medical services to all Filipinos.

SECTION 3. *National Health Passport System* – Consistent with the above policies, the Department of Health (DOH) in coordination with the local government units, shall undertake the implementation of the National Health Passport System.

SECTION 4. *Content and Purpose* – For purposes of this Act, the Health Passport shall be the mobile record booklet of the patient containing, among others, the following:

- a. Patient's medical and dental history as recorded by the physician, dentist or authorized health professionals;
- b. Medical and dental test results;
- c. Diagnosis;
- d. Medicines and medical treatment availed of;
- e. Basic medical data;
- f. Information on all medical and health related benefits provided by laws; and
- g. Information regarding the patient's medical rights and privileges under passport system.

The Health Passport shall serve as the patient's official recognition that he could avail of the free medical and dental diagnostic tests in government hospitals subject to the requirements to be set by the DOH and the local government units where passport holder resides.

SECTION 5. *Authority to Access Passport* – Access by proper medical authorities to the data recorded therein shall be made upon the passport holder's prior consent. In the absence of the relatives, the physician in charge of the patient shall be authorized to review the patient's passport.

SECTION 5. *Scope of the Health Passport Program* – All Filipino citizens shall be entitled to a health passport, which shall be used whenever a patient avails of medical and dental check-ups or treatment provided in government or private medical institutions.

The parents or legal guardians of children born after the effectivity of this Act shall be required to enroll their children in the health passport program. The health passport shall be employed to record the child's initial medical check-up including the necessary immunization. Failure to provide the child with medical check-ups and immunization shall constitute an evidence of violation of the provisions of Article VI, Section 10 of Republic Act No. 7610, otherwise known as the Anti-Child Abuse Act.

The DOH is hereby mandated to issue the guidelines for the medical and dental check-ups and the immunization of children.

SECTION 8. *Procedure*. The City, Municipality, and/or Barangay together with the Department of Social Welfare and Development shall be responsible for the evaluation of the applicants for the free medical and dental diagnostic tests. Those qualified shall then be recommended to the primary medical institution of the local government unit concerned. (e.g. district hospital, provincial hospital or regional hospital) for the issuance of the health passports.

Those who want to obtain the health passport without availing the privilege of free medical and dental diagnostic test may directly secure the same from the aforementioned medical institutions or the local government units implementing the program.

SECTION 9. *Digitization of Rural Health Center Records* – In the pursuit of seamless and efficient health care service, rural health centers in the Philippines are directed to digitize all medical records and evaluation results. This is to create a shareable database to consolidate all information that will be easily accessible in time of need.

SECTION 10. *Senior Citizens Privileges* – All privileges granted to senior citizens under the Senior Citizen's Act and other laws shall also apply to senior citizens with health passports. Medical institutions shall give priority to senior citizens on their needs.

SECTION 11. *Rural Health Units Assessment Report*. DOH shall submit an initial assessment report to the House of Representatives and the Senate on the status of every Rural Health Unit (RHU) within ninety (90) days of the effectivity of this Act to identify which RHUs do not meet the universal standards for quality primary healthcare.

SECTION 12. *Roadmap for the Improvement of Rural Health Units*. Based on the Rural Health Units Assessment Report, as mandated by Section 11 of this Act, the DOH shall likewise prepare a comprehensive roadmap elaborating the recommended steps to improve the quality of primary healthcare.

Annually thereafter, an update report pertaining to the progress of the RHUs shall be submitted to the House of Representatives and the Senate for purposes of monitoring and evaluation.

SECTION 13. *Implementing Agency* – The DOH shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act, and administer this program in coordination with the local government units concerned and other agencies whose functions are bound to affect the implementation of this system.

In this connection, the DOH is hereby mandated to conduct further study on this system. The Department shall also assess the capabilities of the health institutions in the local government units as well as the availability of laboratory apparatuses to put into service the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 14. *Appropriation* – The amount of one hundred million pesos (Php 100,000,000) shall automatically be included in the annual appropriation of DOH for the next five years for the implementation of this Act.

SECTION 15. *Separability Clause* – If any provision or part of this Act shall be held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provisions not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 16. *Repealing Clause* – All laws, decrees, orders, issuances or portions thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 17. *Effectivity* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following the completion of its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation, whichever comes earlier.

Approved,