

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4677



Introduced by Hon. John Marvin "Yul Servo" C. Nieto

EXPLANATORY NOTE

As a manifestation of support to this timely piece of legislation, this representation respectfully refiles this bill, which has constantly been receiving support from the past and present Congress.

It is the declared policy of the State that it values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights. The State shall likewise protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.

Republic Act No. 9439, otherwise known as "*An Act Prohibiting the Detention of Patients in Hospitals and Medical Clinics on the Ground of Nonpayment of Hospital bills or Medical Expenses*" was enacted in order to provide reprieve to impoverished patients who are unable to settle medical expenses and to prevent the illegal detention of patients in hospitals. Eleven years after its enactment, indigent patients are still burdened with the problem of settling their hospital bill due to the penalty charges that they have incurred on unpaid medical expenses.

In order to provide relief and support to indigent patients, this measure seeks to prohibit the imposition of interest and/or penalty charges on unpaid hospital bills and medical expenses of patients whose income is of minimum wage or less, for one year from the patient's discharge. This one year allowance is granted to them in hopes that it may alleviate the financial burden of the patient and that they can focus more on their physical and emotional recovery.

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


JOHN MARVIN "YUL SERVO" C. NIETO

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HOUSE BILL NO. _____

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AN ACT PROHIBITING THE IMPOSITION OF INTEREST AND/OR PENALTY CHARGES ON UNPAID HOSPITAL BILLS AND MEDICAL EXPENSES OF PATIENTS WHO EARN AN INCOME OF THE MINIMUM WAGE OR LESS

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

SECTION 1. Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people.

SEC. 2. Prohibition on Interest and/or Penalty Charges on Unpaid Hospital Bills or Medical Expenses. - It shall be unlawful for any hospital or medical clinic to charge interest or impose other penalties on unpaid hospital bills and medical expenses of patients who earn minimum wage or less, for one year from the date of the discharge.

This prohibition shall likewise apply to the unpaid hospital bills and medical expenses of minor patients whose parents or legal guardians earn minimum wage or less.

SEC. 3. Penalties. - Any officer or employee of the hospital or medical clinic responsible for billing who violates the provisions of this Act shall be punished by a fine of not less than Twenty Thousand Pesos (PhP 20,000.00) but not more than Fifty Thousand Pesos (PhP 50,000.00), or imprisonment of not less than one (1) month but not more than six (6) months, or both such fine and imprisonment, at the discretion of the proper court.

SEC. 4. Implementing Rules and Regulations. - The Department of Health, in consultation with The Department of Labor and Employment, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act within ninety (90) days from its effectivity.

SEC. 5. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, and issuances inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 6. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect immediately upon its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,