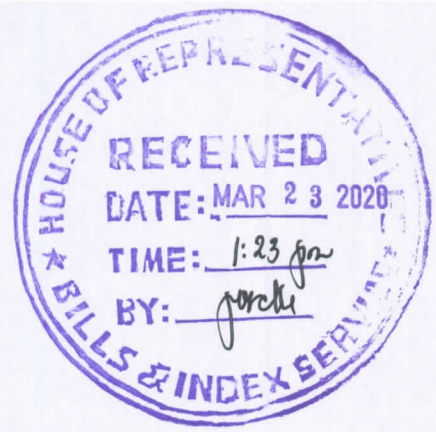


Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City

**EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session



**HOUSE BILL NO. 6618**

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Introduced by: **HON. "KUYA" JOSE ANTONIO R. SY-ALVARADO**

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**AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN EPIDEMICS AND/OR PANDEMICS PREPAREDNESS  
PLAN, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES THEROF**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

A pandemic occurs when a novel strain of virus emerges that has the ability to infect and be passed between humans. Because humans have little immunity to the new virus, a worldwide epidemic, or pandemic, can ensue.<sup>1</sup>

According to the first Global Health Security (**GHS**) Index of the Economist Intelligence Unit, no country is fully prepared for epidemics and pandemics. The Philippines, although ranked an above-average 53<sup>rd</sup> out of a total of 195 countries, is clearly not prepared having only 47.6 index score out of a possible 100. The summary was based on 6 major categories which included Prevention, Detection and Reporting, Rapid Response, Health System, Compliance with International Norms and Risk Environment.

Considering the Philippine's current situation in managing the COVID-19 outbreak, this bill aims to establish an epidemic/pandemic emergency plan in order for the country to be better prepared to recognize and manage future threats of epidemic/pandemic.

Thus, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

**"KUYA" JOSE ANTONIO R. SY-ALVARADO**   
*Representative*  
*First District of Bulacan*

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<sup>1</sup> US Homeland Security Council (May 2006) *National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza*.

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

**SECTION 1. Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “*Epidemic and Pandemic Preparedness Act of 2020.*”

**SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy.** - It is the policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health and instill health consciousness among them. The State shall likewise strive to efficiently and immediately address potential and actual public health emergencies for the promotion of the general welfare of the people.

**SECTION 3. Definitions of Terms** – For purpose of this Act, the following terms are defined:

- a. **“Emerging Infectious Diseases** - are infections that have recently appeared within a population or those whose incidence or geographic range is rapidly increasing or threatens to increase in the near future. Emerging infections can be caused by previously undetected or unknown infectious agents.
- b. **“Epidemic”** - an outbreak of disease that spreads quickly and affects many individuals at the same time.
- c. **“Isolation”** – is used to separate ill persons who have a communicable disease from those who are healthy. Isolation restricts the movement of ill persons to help stop the spread of certain diseases.
- d. **Health Care Facility** – refers to hospitals, primary health-care centers, isolation camps, burn patient units, feeding centers and others. In emergency situations, health-care facilities are often faced with an exceptionally high number of patients, some of whom may require specific medical care.
- e. **“Pandemic”** - a type of *epidemic* with greater range and coverage. It is an outbreak of a disease that occurs over a wide geographic area and affects an exceptionally high proportion of the population.
- f. **“Quarantine”** - is used to separate and restrict the movement of healthy/well persons who may have been exposed to a communicable disease to see if they become ill. These people may have been exposed to a disease and do not know it, or they may have the disease but do not show symptoms. Quarantine can also help limit the spread of communicable disease.
- g. **“Re-emerging Infectious Diseases”**- are diseases that once were major health problems globally or in a particular country, and then declined dramatically, but are again becoming health problems for a significant proportion of the population.
- h. **“Social Distancing”**- the practice of maintaining a greater than usual physical distance that should be observed (at least one meter) from other people and/or animal or of avoiding direct contact with people or objects in public places during the outbreak of a contagious disease in order to minimize exposure and reduce the transmission of infection.

**SECTION 4. Intensive Nationwide Information Campaign on Emerging/Re-Emerging Infectious Diseases.** – In coordination with the Local Government Units (LGUs) and applicable government agencies, the Department of Health (DOH) shall launch a comprehensive and intensive information dissemination campaign in order to educate the people on the nature, causes, transmission, including its possible transmission to human beings and prevention of emerging and/or re-emerging infectious diseases.



**SECTION 5. Establishment of Endemic/Pandemic Emergency Council** – The Endemic/Pandemic Emergency Council is hereby established composed of the following: the Secretary of Health as ex-officio Chairman of the council, with the Secretary of Interior and Local Government, President of Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) as ex officio members, and three (3) representatives from the private health sector.

Within fifteen (15) days from the approval of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of this Act, the Endemic/Pandemic Emergency Council shall convene in order to establish a National Epidemic/Pandemic Emergency Plan.

**SECTION 6. Health Care Facilities and Services** - In coordination with the local government units and applicable government agencies, the Endemic/Pandemic Emergency Council shall identify possible isolation centers and health care facilities which shall undertake endemic/pandemic preparedness and prevention services and implement strategies in order to promptly and effectively respond to any public health emergency.

In the event that government health institutions would not be able to sufficiently deal with the public health emergency, the Endemic/Pandemic Emergency Council may designate and require privately owned health care facilities who can provide quality services and sufficient facilities in order for the country to be able to manage such emergency. Such private institution will be reasonably compensated for the use of its facilities and personnel as the case may be.

**SECTION 7. Isolation and Quarantine of Individuals** - In cooperation with the concerned local chief executive, the Council may, authorize quarantine of individuals or groups of individuals who have not been tested, treated, vaccinated, or examined for diagnosis or treatment, or who may have been exposed to someone with disease, in accordance with existing laws, rules and regulations. The Council may likewise authorize the isolation of individuals or groups of individuals who have already contracted the infectious disease in order to prevent the spread of such disease to non-infected persons.

In addition, the Council may have the power to restrain the movement of persons in the identified affected areas. In order to stop or slow down the spread of highly contagious infectious disease, the Council may implement infection control actions such as “physical distancing” or “social distancing”.

**SECTION 8. Control of Pharmaceutical Agents and Medical Supplies.** – In order to ensure ample medical supplies that will be used in controlling an epidemic/pandemic, the Council shall purchase, store or distribute sufficiently adequate supply of personal protective equipment (PPE), anti-viral agents, anti-toxins, serums and vaccines for emerging/re-emerging infectious diseases.

Upon the recommendation of the Council, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) shall ensure that the use and rationing of the said medical supplies be controlled, restricted and regulated in the event of an epidemic/pandemic.

**SECTION 9. Monitoring Program.** - In order to monitor the extent of the spread and progression of the infectious diseases, the Council shall establish a comprehensive monitoring program. The monitoring program shall likewise determine the sufficiency and effectiveness of the programs and activities established to prevent the spread of the said disease.

**SECTION 10. Reporting Procedures.** - The Council shall establish reporting procedures including the use of a coding system to be followed by all hospitals, laboratories and testing centers in order to ensure the confidentiality and non-disclosure of the personal information gathered and medical records of all patients and individuals infected or suspected to have been infected with the disease. All medical reports relating to the emerging/re-emerging infectious disease shall be collated and forwarded to the Council.

**SECTION 11. Distribution of Personal Protective Equipment.** - To ensure the protection of health care workers and responders and prevent the spread of the infectious disease, the Council shall provide them with adequate PPE such as but not limited to N95 respiratory masks, gloves, face shields and goggles.

**SECTION 12. Mandatory Application of Appropriate Clinical Procedures.** – The proper clinical management policies and procedures shall be mandatorily implemented to individuals found to have been infected or suspected of being infected with the identified emerging/re-emerging infectious disease.

**SECTION 13. Creation of Emergency Fund.** - An emergency fund which shall initially consist of One Hundred Million Pesos (Php100,000,000.00) is hereby created and established to be utilized in managing the endemic/pandemic which shall be under the administration, control and supervision of the DOH.

**SECTION 14. Separability Clause** - If any provision of this act is declared unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other provision hereof.

**SECTION 15. Repealing Clause-** All laws, decrees, issuances or portions thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

**SECTION 16. Effectivity-** This act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in two (2) national newspaper of general circulation.

*Approved,*

