

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

**SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

**HOUSE BILL NO. 3336**

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

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Introduced by **Hon. Tricia Nicole Q. Velasco-Catera**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

This bill seeks to establish the Philippine Eye Center which is envisioned to provide comprehensive, high quality, affordable and specialized eye care services to our countrymen. It shall also serve as a venue for advancing the field of ophthalmology by undertaking and supporting research, education, and training efforts that will improve the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of eye and allied diseases in the country.


In this regard, Section 11, Article XIII of the 1987 Constitution provides, in part, that "The State shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall endeavor to make essential goods, health and other social services available to all people at affordable cost. There shall be priority for the needs of the underprivileged sick, elderly, disabled, women, and children."

This bill is in consonance with constitutional mandate to promote and protect the right of people to health. It is the policy of the State to secure the well-being of the people by providing them with specialized health services.

A large segment of the Philippine population consists of indigent people, or those who cannot afford quality eye care services. Despite the prevalence of eye diseases, disorders, and other related ailments, and their tremendous effect on the health of the general population, these conditions have not been given enough attention and priority. In the Philippines, statistics on blindness are staggering - approximately one million Filipinos are blind in one or both eyes. The common causes of blindness include cataracts, retinal and macular diseases, optic nerve diseases, glaucoma, and trauma. It is further worth noting that cataracts, which are generally considered curable, are responsible for over eighty percent (80%) of blindness.

Visual impairment can not only affect quality of life, it can also prevent persons from reaching their full potential. For this reason, and in keeping with the global initiative for the reduction of avoidable visual impairment, the establishment of the Philippine Eye Center is of paramount importance.

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

  
TRICIA NICOLE Q. VELASCO-CATERA

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**AN ACT CREATING THE PHILIPPINE EYE CENTER, APPROPRIATING  
FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

*Be 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 "*Philippine Eye Center Act of 2016*".

**SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote and protect the right of the people to health by providing specialized health and medical services that will secure their well-being. Towards this end, the State shall establish a medical institution that shall provide comprehensive, high quality, affordable and specialized medical services for the prevention, control, and treatment of eye and allied diseases.

**SEC. 3. *Creation of the Philippine Eye Center.*** - There is hereby created a body corporate to be known as the Philippine Eye Center, which shall have its principal office in Metro Manila.

**SEC. 4. *Purposes and Objectives.*** - The purposes and objectives of the Philippine Eye Center are:

- (a) To construct, establish, equip, maintain, administer and operate a medical institution which shall specialize in the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, care, rehabilitation and/or relief of eye and allied diseases, as well as provide medical care, rehabilitation, and relief therefor;
- (b) To undertake, promote, encourage, engage and assist in medical and scientific research relative to the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of eye and allied diseases;

- (c) To conduct fact-finding investigations, and to report, publish and disseminate information on eye and allied diseases;
- (d) To enhance nationwide awareness for eye and allied diseases, as well as the prevention, diagnosis and treatment thereof, by financing, sponsoring, holding, or participating in congresses, conventions, conferences, seminars, workshops, and training programs in eye diseases and/or related fields in the Philippines or abroad;
- (e) To encourage and assist in the education and training of physicians, nurses, health officers, social workers and other medical and technical personnel in the practical and scientific conduct and implementation of services to eye patients;
- (f) To assist universities, hospitals and research institutions in their studies on eye and allied diseases and other related fields, to encourage and grant scholarships for advanced training and specialization in ophthalmic and related fields, and to support educational programs of value to general public health; and
- (g) To extend medical services to the general public, especially the poor and less fortunate in life without regard to race, creed, color or political belief.

**SEC. 5. Powers and Functions.** - For the attainment and/or furtherance of its stated purposes and objectives, the Philippine Eye Center, as a body corporate acting through its Board of Trustees, shall have all the powers pertaining to a juridical person, and is therefore authorized, among others:

- (a) To acquire and hold any property of whatever nature or description, and to dispose of such property under any mode of conveyance or encumbrance;
- (b) To contract and be contracted with;
- (c) To mortgage, lease, sell, transfer, convey or otherwise dispose of its properties;
- (d) To solicit and receive donations, endowments and funds in the form of contributions, whether in cash or in kind, from both the public and private sectors and from domestic or foreign sources;
- (e) To open such accounts in banks and other financial institutions, and to disburse such funds or invest the same as the Board may direct to advance or accomplish the purposes or interest of the Philippine Eye Center;
- (f) To invite foreign eye specialists and similar experts in various medical fields to train the personnel or trainees or residents of the Philippine Eye Center;



- (g) To send the personnel of the Philippine Eye Center to research or medical institutes or universities for advanced training or observation and to attend regional or international conventions, conferences, congresses, and seminars as the Board may deem necessary to accomplish the purposes and objectives of the Philippine Eye Center;
- (h) To invest in, and purchase or otherwise acquire, own, hold, use, lease, grant, mortgage, pledge, sell, assign, convey, transfer, exchange or otherwise deal with, real and/or personal properties of every kind and nature, including shares of stock, bonds, debentures, notes, securities and other evidences of indebtedness or obligations of other corporations, whether domestic or foreign, and whether government or private;
- (i) To obtain loans, borrow funds and/or arrange financing or credit assistance of whatever kind and nature from all sources, whether domestic or foreign and whether government or private, and to mortgage, pledge or otherwise encumber any of its properties and assets for the purpose of securing or guaranteeing the performance or fulfillment of any obligation it may undertake for itself or for other entities in which it may be interested;
- (j) To levy, assess and collect such fees, charges and assessments as may be necessary or proper to support, finance and maintain its operations; and
- (k) To exercise such other powers and functions as may be necessary or incidental for the accomplishment of the purposes and objectives of the Philippine Eye Center.

**SEC. 6. Board of Trustees.** - The Philippine Eye Center shall be governed, and its activities and properties shall be directed, controlled and administered by a Board of Trustees, hereinafter referred to as the Board, which shall be composed of seven (7) members to be appointed by the President of the Philippines upon the recommendation of the Department of Health, subject to the provisions of Republic Act No. 10149.

The members of the Board shall receive no salary. They shall, however, receive a *per diem* of not exceeding five thousand pesos (P 5,000.00) for every meeting of the Board actually attended: Provided, however, that the total amount of *per diem* for all the meetings of the Board in a single month shall not exceed one hundred thousand pesos (P 100,000.00).

The members of the Board shall serve for a period of four (4) years and until their successors shall have been appointed and qualified. Any vacancy in the Board shall be filled by the appointment of the President of the Philippines upon recommendation of the Department of Health, and the appointee shall serve the unexpired term.

**SEC. 7. Powers and Functions of the Board.** - The Board shall have the following powers and functions:

- (a) To elect a Chairman from among them, who shall be the presiding officer of the Board;
- (b) To appoint an Executive Director of the Philippine Eye Center who shall serve as Vice-Chairman of the Board;
- (c) To formulate policies and adopt measures which are necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act; and
- (d) To perform such other functions as may be necessary to achieve the objectives of this Act.

A majority consisting of four (4) members of the Board shall constitute a quorum to transact business. Any decision of the majority of such four (4) members on any matter duly presented to the Board shall constitute a valid and binding act of the Philippine Eye Center, except on matters where existing laws or the by-laws, rules and regulations adopted by the Board require a greater number.

**SEC. 8. Executive Director.** - The Philippine Eye Center shall have an Executive Director who shall be its chief executive officer. The Executive Director shall have the following powers and functions:

- (a) To appoint, remove, and fix the compensation of the personnel of the Philippine Eye Center, subject to the approval of the Board;
- (b) To prepare the agenda for the meeting of the Board and to submit for the consideration of the Board policies, guidelines, and other important measures that may be deemed necessary for the effective implementation of the purposes and objectives of this Act;
- (c) To execute the policies, guidelines and programs approved by the Board and be responsible for the efficient discharge of management and operational functions;
- (d) To direct and supervise the internal operations and administration of the Philippine Eye Center;
- (e) To execute, on behalf of the Board, all contracts and agreements which the latter may enter into, and to execute, accomplish and deliver any and all documents relative to such contracts and agreements; and

- (f) To exercise such other powers and perform such other duties as may be vested by the Board.

**SEC. 9. *Organizational Structure and Staffing Pattern.*** - The Board shall determine the organizational structure and staffing pattern of the Philippine Eye Center subject to evaluation by the Civil Service Commission and of the Organization Position Classification and Compensation Bureau of the Department of Budget and Management. The Board may reorganize said structure, modify the staffing pattern and create or abolish divisions, sections or units of the Philippine Eye Center.

**SEC. 10. *Government Contribution.*** - The Government shall constitute the necessary land, building, equipment and facilities to the Philippine Eye Center, and shall pay such obligations for real, personal and mixed properties arising from such undertaking under a deferred payment arrangement within five (5) years, at a preferred rate of interest.

**SEC. 11. *Property of the Philippine Eye Center.*** - The property of the Philippine Eye Center shall consist of such real, personal, mixed, and other type of property, now owned or reserved for, or may hereafter be given, donated, acquired, transferred or conveyed to, the Philippine Eye Center by the Philippine Government, its branches and instrumentalities, other local government units, any foreign government, as well as by trusts, foundations, corporations, or persons, alien or domestic, in order to carry out its purposes and objectives as set forth herein.

**SEC. 12. *Establishment of Regional Eye Centers.*** - The Philippine Eye Center shall endeavor to establish and operate at least one (1) hospital in every region in the country.

**SEC. 13. *Assistance from Government Offices.*** - The Philippine Eye Center may call upon any department, bureau, office, agency or instrumentality of the Government, including government-owned or controlled corporations, for such assistance as it may need in the pursuit of its purposes and objectives.

All individuals, entities and institutions are hereby enjoined to render full assistance and corporation to the Philippine Eye Center in the accomplishment of its objectives and activities.

**SEC. 14. *Tax Exemptions and Privileges.*** - Any provision of law to the contrary notwithstanding, all donations, contributions or endowments that may be made by entities or persons to the Philippine Eye Center shall be exempt from income and donor's taxes, and shall constitute allowable deductions in full from the income of the donors or grantors for income tax purposes.

The Philippine Eye Center, its assets, acquisitions, income, importations, operations, and transactions shall be exempt from any and all taxes, duties, fees, licenses, assessments, imposts, and other charges imposed directly or indirectly by the Government, or any political subdivision or instrumentality thereof.

**SEC. 15. *Supervision by the Department of Health.*** — The Philippine Eye Center shall be under the supervision of the Department of Health.

**SEC. 16. *Appropriations.*** - The sum of five hundred million pesos (P 500,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated out of any funds in the National Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the initial operation and maintenance of the Philippine Eye Center. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for the continued operation of the Philippine Eye Center shall be included in the Annual General Appropriations Act.

**SEC. 17. *Annual Report.*** - The Philippine Eye Center shall submit an annual report to the President of the Philippines, Senate Committee on Health and Demography, and the House Committee on Health on its activities, accomplishments and recommendations to improve the delivery of specialized medical services.

**SEC. 18. *Effect of Dissolution.*** If for any reason, the Philippine Eye Center is dissolved, its properties and assets shall revert to the National Government for disposition in accordance with law.

**SEC. 19. *Applicability of the Corporation Code.*** - The provisions of the Corporation Code, insofar as these are not inconsistent with the provisions and policies provided in this Act, shall be suppletorily applicable.

**SEC. 20. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** - Within ninety days (90) after the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Health and the Secretary of Budget and Management shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act.

**SEC. 21. *Separability Clause.*** - If any provision or section of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, such invalidity or unconstitutionality shall not affect the other provisions or sections of this Act.

**SEC. 22. *Repealing Clause.*** - All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with any provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

**SEC. 23. *Effectivity.*** - This Act shall take effect thirty (30) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,