

Republic of the Philippines  
**House of Representatives**  
Quezon City, Metro Manila

**EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 5825



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**INTRODUCED BY**  
**REP. ALFRED VARGAS**

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**AN ACT**  
**ESTABLISHING THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH ON WOMEN'S HEALTH**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

It is the policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of every Filipino. Given the dynamic and vital roles that Filipino women play in the society and the numerous risks on their health and well-being, it is imperative that we adopt the best practices of developed countries and find ways to address these kinds of issues on health.

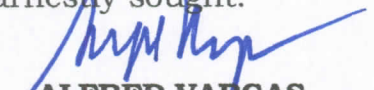
In 2015, almost 92 percent of all maternal deaths in Asia Pacific - around 78,000 - occurred in just 12 countries. The Philippines is one of these 12 countries with 1,721 registered maternal deaths. The number of maternal deaths in the country is dropping by only about 2% per year. This means that the number of Filipino pregnant women who die every year remains alarmingly high.

The United States of America established the Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH) at the National Institute of Health in September 1990 in order "to strengthen, develop, and increase research on diseases, disorders, and conditions that are unique to, more prevalent among, or more serious in women, or for which there are different risk factors for women than for men."<sup>1</sup>

The research undertaken by the OWRH has found out that sex and gender identity play crucial roles in health, wellness, and disease progression. Hence, a research center focused on the nuances and specifics tailored for women's health is important.

This bill seeks to establish the Office of Research on Women's Health in the Philippines.

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



**ALFRED VARGAS**

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<sup>1</sup>Pinn, V.M. (1994) "The Role of the NIH's Office of Research on Women's Health." *Academic Medicine: Journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges* 69(9): 698-702.

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

**SECTION 1. Short Title.** - This Act shall be known as "Research on Women's Health Act".

**SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy.** - It is the policy of the State to give priority to the needs of women. Taking into account the inherent disparity between men and women, the State shall undertake a research focusing on women's health which shall be responsive to the needs of every Filipino woman.

**SECTION 3. Definition of Terms.** - For purposes of this Act, the term:

- a. "Secretary" shall refer to the Secretary of Health;
- b. "Women's health condition" shall refer to all diseases, disorders, and conditions –
  - i. Unique to serious, or more prevalent to women;
  - ii. For which the factors of medical risk or types of medical intervention are different for women, or which it is unknown whether such factors or types are different for women; or



- iii. With respect to which there has been insufficient clinical research involving women as subjects or insufficient clinical data on women;
- c. "Research on women's health" shall mean research on women's health conditions, including research on preventing such conditions; and
- d. "Committee" shall refer to the Advisory Committee on Women's Health.

**SECTION 4. *Establishment of the Office of Research on Women's Health.***

- The Research Office shall be headed by the Secretary with the following functions:

- A. To identify projects of research on women's or supported by both the government and non-government agencies;
- B. To promote coordination and collaboration among entities conducting research identified under paragraph A;
- C. To recommend an agenda for conducting and supporting such research; and
- D. To encourage the conduct of such research.

**SECTION 5. *Advisory Committee on Women's Health.*** - In carrying out the provision of Section 4, the Secretary shall establish a Committee to be known as the "Advisory Committee on Women's Health."

**SECTION 6. *Composition.*** - The Committee shall be composed of nine (9) members which shall include the following:

- a. Two (2) representatives from the Department;
- b. Four (4) physicians, practitioners and other health personnel;
- c. Two (2) representatives from a non-governmental organization which conducts research on women'
- d. One (1) representative from the general public;
- e. Majority of the members of the Committee shall be women.

**SECTION 7. *Meetings.*** - The Advisory Committee shall determine the number, time, place and conduct of meetings, except that it shall hold at least one (1) public meeting each year at which the general public is given an opportunity to express views concerning the conduct of research on women's health by the Office.

**SECTION 8. *Term of Office.*** - Members shall be appointed by the Secretary for a term of three (3) years. Of those first appointed, three (3) members shall serve for three (3) years, three (3) members for two (2) years, and last three (3) members for one (1) year.

Any vacancy in the membership of the committee shall be filled in the manner as the original appointment. Any member of the Committee be removed for cause in accordance with procedures established by the Committee.

**SECTION 9. *Functions.*** - The Committee shall have the following functions:

- A. Advise the Secretary on appropriate research activities to the Office with respect to -
  - i. Research of women's health;
  - ii. Research on gender differences in clinical drugs trials, including responses;
  - iii. Research to gender differences in disease etiology, course and treatment;
  - iv. Research on obstetrical gynecological health conditions, diseases and treatment; and
  - v. Research on women's health conditions which require a multidisciplinary approach.
- B. Report to the Secretary on such research;
- C. Provide recommendation to the Secretary regarding activities of the Office; and
- D. Prepare a report regarding the activities of the Committee.

**SECTION 10. *Appropriations.*** - To carry out the provisions of this Act, such amount as may be necessary is hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National Treasury. Thereafter, the amount necessary for the continuous operation of the Office of the Research on Women's Health shall be included in the annual appropriations of the Department of Health.

**SECTION 11. *Repealing Clause.*** - All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations or other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

**SECTION 12, *Separability Clause*.** - If any portion or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provision not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.

**SECTION 13. *Effectivity*.** - This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following the completion of its publication either in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

*Approved,*