

**REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
QUEZON CITY**

**EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
FIRST REGULAR SESSION**

HOUSE BILL NO. 6746



**INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVES
ESTRELLITA B. SUANSING and HORACIO P. SUANSING, JR.**

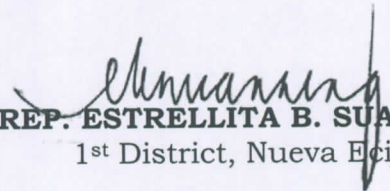
EXPLANATORY NOTE

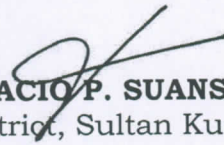
On January 30, 2020, the Philippines reports its first case of COVID-19 in the country.¹ COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by a novel coronavirus and originated from Wuhan, China. The first local transmission of COVID-19 in the country was confirmed on March 7, 2020.² The World Health Organization (WHO) announced COVID-19 as a pandemic on March 11, 2020.

Preparedness under this proposed bill refers to activities and measures taken in advance to ensure the effective response to the impact of a pandemic, including the issuance of timely and effective health warnings and subsequent management. A preparedness plan that would be put in place will greatly reduce transmission should another virus result to another pandemic, which may result in lower cases of hospitalization and deaths, as well as ensure that essential services, medical supplies and equipment are readily available for use, especially by medical frontliners.

This bill gives the Department of Health the mandate to undertake measures, such as evaluation, planning, organizing, and training to improve national preparedness for public health emergencies.

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


REP. ESTRELLITA B. SUANSING
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¹ CNN Philippines (cnnphilippines.com)

² World Health Organization (<https://www.who.int>)

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AN ACT
STRENGTHENING THE NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE TO
PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES

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

1 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “Pandemic
2 Preparedness Act.”
3

4 **SEC. 2. Creation of a National Health Strategy for Public Health**
5 **Emergencies.** – The Secretary of Health shall spearhead the creation of a
6 national health strategy to address public health emergencies. This strategy
7 shall provide for integrated policy coordination and strategic direction with
8 respect to all matters related to national public health and medical
9 preparedness and execution and deployment of national response before,
10 during, and following public health emergencies.
11

12 **SEC. 3. Components of a National Health Strategy.** – The National Health
13 Strategy shall include:
14

- 15 (A) Provisions for increasing the preparedness, response capabilities, and
16 surge capacity of ambulatory care facilities, dental health facilities,
17 and critical care service systems;
- 18 (B) Plans for optimizing a coordinated and flexible approach to the
19 medical surge capacity of hospitals, other health care facilities, critical
20 care, and trauma care and emergency medical systems;
- 21 (C) Provisions taking into account the unique needs of individuals with
22 disabilities in a public health emergency;
- 23 (D) Strategic initiatives to advance countermeasures to diagnose,
24 mitigate, prevent, or treat harm from any biological agent or toxin or
25 any chemical, radiological, or nuclear agent or agents, whether
26 naturally occurring, unintentional, or deliberate;

- 1 (E) Conduct of periodic evaluations of national and local preparedness
2 and response capabilities which shall include drill and exercises to
3 ensure medical surge capacity for events without notice.
4

5 **SEC. 4. Creation of Task Force on Public Emergencies.** – (A) A task force
6 under the control of the Secretary of Health shall be established in order to
7 conduct research necessary for the creation of the Strategy. The Task Force
8 shall be composed of representatives from:

- 9 (1) The Department of Health (DOH);
10 (2) The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG);
11 (3) The National Security Adviser; and
12 (4) The Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC).
13

14 (B) The Task Force shall:

- 15 (1) Monitor emerging issues and concerns as they relate to medical and
16 public health preparedness and response for at-risk individuals in the
17 event of a public health emergency;
18 (2) Identify and minimize gaps, duplication and other inefficiencies in
19 medical and public health preparedness and response activities and the
20 actions necessary to overcome these obstacles;
21 (3) Disseminate and update novel and best practices of outreach to and
22 care of at-risk individuals before, during, and following public health
23 emergencies in as timely a manner as is practicable, including from the
24 time a public health threat is identified; and
25 (4) Ensure that public health and medical information distributed by the
26 government during a public health emergency is delivered in a manner
27 that takes into account the range of communication needs of the
28 intended recipients, including at-risk individuals.
29

30 **SEC. 5. Creation of Medical Reserve Corps.** – The Secretary of Health shall
31 establish a medical reserve corps composed of volunteer health professionals.
32 The Medical Reserve Corps shall be called into duty if needed during public
33 health emergencies.
34

35 **SEC. 6. Medical Supplies and Equipment During Public Health**
36 **Emergencies.** – The Department of Health (DOH) shall identify the medical
37 supplies and equipment, such as pharmaceutical agents (e.g. medicines,
38 vaccines, serums and anti-toxins), personal protective equipment (PPE), and
39 other related innovations it considers advisable in the interest of preparing
40 for or controlling a pandemic. The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)
41 shall ensure that such medical supplies and equipment are readily available
42 during a public health emergency.
43

1 The DTI shall also ensure that there are local manufacturers available
2 in the country to meet the supply demands of such medical supplies and
3 equipment.
4

5 **SEC. 7. Control of Pharmaceutical Agents and Medical Supplies.** – In the
6 event of a pandemic, the Department of Health may control, restrict and
7 regulate the use and rationing of pharmaceutical agents and/or medical
8 supplies and equipment it considers essential during a public health
9 emergency.
10

11 **SEC. 8. Authorization of Appropriations.** – To carry out the provisions of
12 this Act, there are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be
13 necessary for each fiscal year.
14

15 **SEC. 9. Separability Clause.** – If any provision or part thereof is held invalid
16 or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise
17 affected shall remain valid and subsisting.
18

19 **SEC. 10. Repealing Clause.** – Any law, presidential decree or issuance,
20 executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule, or regulation
21 contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed,
22 modified, or amended accordingly.
23

24 **SEC. 11. Effectivity Clause.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after
25 its publication in the Official Gazette or at least a newspaper of general
26 circulation.
27

28 Approved,