

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Seventeenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **3967**



Introduced by Honorable Michaelina M. Antonio

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The First 1000 Days of Life – from the mother’s pregnancy to the child’s 2nd birthday – has been called the “golden window of opportunity” for a comprehensive package of nutrition and related interventions to achieve significant changes in reduction in child stunting, underweight and wasting, at the same time contribute to complete child development.¹ Nutrition during the mother’s pregnancy and in the first years of a child’s life provides the essential building blocks for brain development, healthy growth and a strong immune system. In fact, a growing body of scientific evidence shows that the foundations of a person’s lifelong health—including their predisposition to obesity and certain chronic diseases—are largely set during this 1,000 day window.

It is why it is critical that women and children get the right nutrition during this time. Malnutrition early in life can cause irreversible damage to children’s brain development and their physical growth, leading to a diminished capacity to learn, poorer performance in school, greater susceptibility to infection and disease and a lifetime of lost earning potential.²

This bill seeks to establish a mother and child healthcare program in every barangay so that mothers and children may be protected from malnutrition. The program shall include vaccinations, nutritional supplements, check-ups, and establishment of lactation stations. Counseling services and information dissemination drives shall likewise be provided.

By focusing on improving nutrition during the critical first 1,000 days, much of the serious and irreparable damage caused by hunger and malnutrition can be prevented.

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


MICHAELINA M. ANTONIO

¹<http://www.nnc.gov.ph/40-10-kumainments/1477-2016-nutrition-month-theme-focuses-on-the-first-1000-days>

² <http://thousanddays.org/the-issue/why-1000-days/>

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**AN ACT PROTECTING FILIPINO MOTHERS AND CHILDREN FROM
MALNUTRITION BY ESTABLISHING A MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH
CARE PROGRAM, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

SEC. 1. *Short Title.* This Act shall be known as the *"First 1,000 Days Act."*

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is hereby declared the policy of the State: (a) to equally protect the life of the mother and the life of the unborn from conception; (b) to recognize the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health, and the duty of the State to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right of access to such health care services. It is likewise declared that timely interventions during the first 1,000 days be undertaken to address issues of malnutrition of children aged 0-2 years old such as stunting and wasting as well as improve the welfare of pregnant and lactating mothers nationwide.

For purposes of this Act, the "First 1,000 Days" refers to the period starting from Day One of a woman's pregnancy, until the child reaches the age of two years.

SEC. 3. *Establishing a First 1000 Days Program in every barangay.* The Department of Health (DOH) shall, in coordination with the Department of Interior and Local Government

(DILG), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), National Nutrition Council (NNC), and Food and Nutrition Research Institute - Department of Science and Technology (FNRI- DOST), develop a comprehensive health care program for pregnant and lactating women as well as the health and nutrition of their newborn children from 1 to 1,000 days, in every barangay.

SEC. 4. *Program Content.* The maternal and child health care services which may be provided to eligible individuals during the 1,000-day period shall include the following:

1. **Counseling:** Pre-natal and ante-natal counseling shall be administered by the Department of Health and the Local Government Units (LGUs). These shall include topics on: (a) the importance of clean water, sanitation and hygiene; (b) proper nutrition; (c) pre-natal and ante-natal health care; (d) the importance of exclusive breast feeding; (e) treating malnourished children with special and therapeutic foods; (f) general family counseling, including child and family development; and (g) timely intervention through safe, appropriate and high-quality complementary food.
2. **Check-ups:** Regular check-ups during and after pregnancy for the mother and child shall be mandated and administered by the Barangay Health Centers.
3. **Vaccinations and Nutritional Supplements:** Necessary vaccinations for infants and nutritional supplements shall be provided free by the Department of Health.
4. **Public Information Drive:** Information on nutrition, pregnancy, pre-natal and post-natal care, breast feeding, and proper hygiene and sanitation shall be disseminated in schools and barangays health centers through different types of media.
5. **Monitoring:** A National Monitoring System shall be implemented to monitor the overall status of infants and their mothers and to know the success and areas of improvement of the program.

6. **Breastfeeding Stations:** All hospitals and workplaces nationwide shall establish lactation stations pursuant to RA 10028 or the "Expanded Breastfeeding Promotion Act of 2009". In workplaces, breastfeeding breaks shall be provided for working breastfeeding mothers. Human milk banks shall also be established in health institutions.

SEC. 5. *Interventions.* The First 1,000 Days Program includes the provision of the following interventions:

1. Ensuring nutrition for pregnant women
2. Improved breastfeeding practices (0-6 months)
3. Improved complementary feeding practices (7-24 months)
4. Improved protection against undernutrition and disease (6-24 months)
5. Improved feeding of children who are sick and undernourished

SEC. 6. *Barangay Health Volunteers.* The DOH, in coordination with the LGUs, shall provide more support and assistance to Barangay Health Volunteers such as the Barangay Health Workers (BHWs) and Barangay Nutrition Scholars (BNS). A series of practical and effective training courses shall also be made available to upgrade their skills and competence in the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Health shall, in coordination with the Secretary of the Interior and Local Government, and Secretary of Social Welfare and Development and representatives of recognized women's and children's organizations and academic communities, promulgate rules and regulations necessary for the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 8. *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 Program shall be included in the annual appropriation of the DOH.

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

SEC. 10. *Repealing Clause.* Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule and regulation contrary to or inconsistent with any provision of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

SEC. 11. *Effectivity Clause.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,