

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

**SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

**HOUSE BILL NO. 897**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Introduced by: Hon. Angelina "Helen" D.L. Tan, M.D.

**AN ACT PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO INDIGENT CANCER PATIENTS AND  
ESTABLISHING FOR THE PURPOSE A CANCER ASSISTANCE FUND**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

According to the Institute of Human Genetics, National Institutes of Health, University of the Philippines, Manila, cancer has become a serious public health issue and both a clinical as well as economic burden for Filipinos. Cancer has claimed thousands of lives each year and several billions of pesos in healthcare and treatment cost were spent because of the disease.

The Japanese Journal of Clinical Oncology in an article entitled, "Cancer and the Philippine Cancer Control Program", stated that cancer is the third leading cause of morbidity and mortality in the country where leading cancer sites/types are lung, breast, cervix, liver, colon and rectum, prostate, stomach, oral cavity, ovary and leukemia. Presently, there is a low cancer prevention consciousness and most cancer patients seek consultation only at advanced stages. Cancer survival rates in the Philippines are relatively low.

The incidence and mortality rate of cancer in the country is expected to rise if organized and sustained specialized care and preventive measures are not initiated. The chemotherapy for cancer patients may cost about P100,000 per session. The cost of treatment by radiation, or even examination by MRI, is burdensome even to middle-income patients, and often beyond the reach of the poor, the reason why cancer has gained a reputation as the disease for the rich.

In view of the foregoing, this bill seeks to establish a Cancer Assistance Fund aimed at providing financial aid for costly medicines and treatment to poor cancer patients. The proposal is in light of the social justice provision of the Constitution, which mandates for the adoption of an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development, which shall endeavor to make essential goods, health and other social services available to all the people at affordable cost.

For this reason, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

*Al Tan*  
**ANGELINA "HELEN" D.L. TAN, M.D.**  
4th District, Quezon

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

SECTION 1. It is a declared policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people. For this purpose, the State shall implement a system of providing premium care and assistance to indigent cancer patients.

The State shall automatically appropriate the amount of One Billion Pesos (Php 1,000,000,000.00) annually to support the cancer medicine and treatment assistance program to be administered by the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (Philhealth). The Program shall prioritize indigent and underprivileged cancer patient beneficiaries to be identified by the Philhealth in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

The Philhealth in consultation with the DSWD and the representatives from hospital association, medical practitioners and marginalized organizations shall formulate relevant rules and regulations within six (6) months from the approval of this Act.

SEC 2. This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.