

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

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 7858



Introduced by **HON. RODOLFO M. ORDANES**
Representative, Senior Citizens Party-List

AN ACT
GRANTING FREE VACCINATION FOR ALL SENIOR CITIZENS, AMENDING FOR THE
PURPOSE SECTION 4 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7432, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC
ACT NO. 9257, FURTHER AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9994, OTHERWISE
KNOWS AS THE "EXPANDED SENIOR CITIZENS ACT OF 2010," PROVIDING
FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Senior citizens, 60 years old and above, are highly vulnerable due to their weakened immune systems and pre-existing health conditions.¹ They have a greater likelihood of acquiring illnesses including pneumonia and influenza which have symptoms similar to COVID-19.² Even the elderly who are considered healthy may still be susceptible to pneumonia and its consequences.³ Yet, even with the high risk that attends non-vaccination of senior citizens, a large majority of the Philippines ten million senior citizens are yet to be given access to tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, shingles, measles, influenza virus, pneumococcal disease, and other similarly DOH approved vaccines that were deemed necessary for their protection and maintenance.

¹ BMPlus, "Continuing vaccination services play a crucial role in protecting the Filipino elderly." (25 June 2020) Business Mirror. Retrieved from: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/06/25/continuing-vaccination-services-play-a-crucial-role-in-protecting-the-filipino-elderly/>

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

This lack of access is primarily due to the lack of financial capability of senior citizens to pay for vaccination, considering that free vaccination is only available to indigent senior citizens. This has led thousands of our senior citizens' deaths yearly from diseases that could have avoided and prevented if they were provided the proper and necessary vaccines. Pneumonia remains to be the second leading cause of death among senior citizens⁴ even if there is already a vaccine against it.

This constant reality faced by our ten million senior citizens, which can easily be remedied by the government, is deplorable and requires immediate action. To allow this reality to continue will create an environment for our senior citizens which runs contrary to the mandate of the 1987 Philippine Constitution and other relevant laws. Accordingly, the needs of the elderly are directed to be prioritized⁵ considering their high vulnerabilities to diseases. Only by providing them a higher degree of protection can our government stay true to its mandate of social justice⁶ and uphold their right to life.⁷

Thus, this bill seeks to provide all senior citizens with free access to tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, shingles, measles, influenza virus, pneumococcal disease, and other similarly DOH approved vaccines that it deems necessary for the protection and maintenance of senior citizens in the Philippines.

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



RODOLFO M. ORDANES
Representative
Senior Citizens Party-List

⁴ Philippine Country Report. "Community Services for the Elderly in the Philippines: A Collaboration of the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Department of Health" (2007). Retrieved from: https://www.mhlw.go.jp/bunya/kokusaigyomu/asean/asean/kokusai/siryou/dl/h19_philippines.pdf.

⁵ in Article 2, Section 11 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution.

⁶ Article 13, Section 1 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution.

⁷ Article 3, Section 1 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution.

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Be it 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 "Free Immunization for Senior Citizens Act of 2020"

SECTION 2. Section 4 (f) of Republic Act No. 7432, as amended by Republic Act No. 9257, further amended by Republic Act No. 9994, otherwise known as the "Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010", shall be hereby further amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 4. Privileges for the Senior Citizens. –

The senior citizens shall be entitled to the following:

xxx

(f) the DOH shall administer free vaccination against the **TETANUS, DIPHTERIA, PERTUSSIS, SHINGLES, MEASLES**, influenza virus, pneumococcal disease, **AND OTHER SIMILAR APPROVED VACCINATIONS WHICH THE DOH DEEMS NECESSARY FOR THE PROTECTION AND MAINTENANCE OF ALL** senior citizen patients;"

SECTION 4. *Appropriations.* – The amount needed for the implantation of this Act shall be charged against the appropriations of the Department of Health (“DOH”) in the current and subsequent General Appropriations Act. Thereafter, the amount needed for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the budget of the concerned departments in the annual General Appropriations.

SECTION 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within six (“6”) months from the approval of this Act, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (“DSWD”), DOH, Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (“PHILHEALTH”), and the National Commission on Senior Citizens (“NCSC”), in coordination with other implementing agencies, shall formulate rules and guidelines as may be necessary for the proper implementation and enforcement of this Act.

SECTION 6. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, executive orders, or rules and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly. Furthermore, if any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 7. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (“15”) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or two (“2”) newspapers of the general circulation.

Approved.