

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)  
OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
Third Regular Session )

SENATE  
S.B. No. 2681

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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#### EXPLANATORY NOTE


The Constitution, Article XV, Section 3, paragraph 2 provides that the State shall defend:

“The right of children to assistance, including proper care and nutrition, and special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation and other conditions prejudicial to their development.”

Good vision is essential for proper physical development and educational progress in growing children. Many serious ocular conditions are treatable if identified in the preschool and early school-aged years. Early detection of ocular conditions provides the best opportunity for effective, inexpensive treatment and can have far-reaching implications for vision.

Various identification methods, whether vision screening or comprehensive eye exams required by law, will identify children needing services. A child identified through vision screening should receive a comprehensive eye exam followed by subsequent treatment as needed. A child identified through a comprehensive eye exam should receive subsequent treatment as needed. All children identified as needing services should have access to subsequent treatment as needed.

This bill seeks to establish a grant program to provide vision care to children.

  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO  
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AN ACT  
TO ESTABLISH A GRANT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE VISION CARE TO CHILDREN.

*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 the “Vision Care for Kids Act of 2007”.

SECTION 2. *Definition of Term.* – The following terms as used in this Act shall be defined as follows:

(1) “Comprehensive Eye Examination” includes an assessment of a patient's history, general medical observation, external and ophthalmoscopic examination, visual acuity, ocular alignment and motility, refraction, and as appropriate, binocular vision or gross visual fields, performed by an optometrist or an ophthalmologist;

(2) “LGU” refers to a local government unit, which maybe a province, city or municipality;

(3) “Secretary” refers to the Secretary of Health.

SECTION 3. *Grant regarding vision care for children.* –

(a) In General – The Secretary, may award grants to LGUs on the basis of an established review process for the purpose of complementing existing government efforts for:

(1) providing comprehensive eye examinations by a licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist for children who have been previously identified through a vision

screening or eye examination by a licensed health care provider or vision screener as needing such services, with priority given to children who are under 9 years old;

(2) providing treatment or services, subsequent to the examinations described in paragraph (1), necessary to correct vision problems; and

(3) developing and disseminating, to parents, teachers, and health care practitioners, educational materials on recognizing signs of visual impairment in children.

(b) Criteria and Coordination – The Secretary, in consultation with appropriate professional and consumer organizations including individuals with knowledge of age appropriate vision services, shall develop criteria governing the operation of the grant program under subsection (a), and for the collection of data related to vision assessment and the utilization of follow up services.

(c) Application- To be eligible to receive a grant under subsection (a), an LGU shall submit to the Secretary an application in such form, made in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require, including the following:

(1) information on existing Federal, Federal-State, or State-funded children vision programs;

(2) a plan for the use of grant funds, including how funds will be used to complement existing State efforts (including possible partnerships with non-profit entities);

(3) a plan to determine if a grant eligible child has been identified as provided for in Section 3(a); and

(4) a description of how funds will be used to provide items or services only as a secondary payer to any local government compensation program, under an insurance policy, or under any government health benefits program; or by any entity that provides health services on a prepaid basis.

(d) Evaluations- To be eligible to receive a grant under subsection (a), an LGU shall agree that, not later than one (1) year after the date on which amounts under the grant are first received by it, and annually thereafter while receiving amounts under the grant, the LGU will

submit to the Secretary an evaluation of the operations and activities carried out under the grant, including--

(1) an assessment of the utilization of vision services and the status of children receiving these services as a result of the activities carried out under the grant;

(2) the collection, analysis, and reporting of children's vision data according to guidelines prescribed by the Secretary; and

(3) such other information as the Secretary may require.

(c) *Limitations in Expenditure of Grant* – A grant may be made under subsection (a) only if the LGU involved agrees that it will not expend more than 20 percent (20%) of the amount received under the grant to carry out the purpose described in paragraph (3) of such subsection.

SECTION 4. *Appropriations.* – Such sums as may be necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be taken from the current appropriations of the Department of Health (DOH). Thereafter, the fund necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 5. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the Act or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 6. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SECTION 7. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

fldp/5/6/07