

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

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
1st Regular Session

House Bill No. 7205



**Introduced by Representatives ERIC G. YAP, PAOLO Z. DUTERTE,
and EDVIC G. YAP**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Constitution provides that not only the family has the duty to care for its elderly members but also the state through just programs of social security.

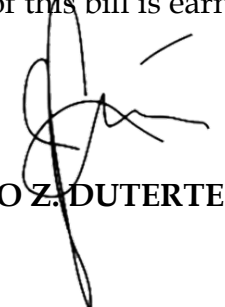
Currently, the Philippines is experiencing increase in ageing population. While it is true that the vulnerability to illnesses becomes rampant in old age, the country's poor health literacy causes the low uptake of eye care services as many Filipinos harbor misconceptions about vision problems and view visual impairment as a natural part of ageing, when in fact, it is not. As a response, the country must strengthen eye care services at the primary care level in conformity with the lesson that prevention is always better than cure.

However, the latest World Social Protection Report from 2017-2019 shows that only 39.8% of people older than the statutory pensionable age in the Philippines receive an old-age pension, may it be contributory, noncontributory or both—making basic health services unreachable to the elderly. Hence, it is high time that the government provides more comprehensive eye care services, integrate eye care within local health systems, and confront common eye diseases that cause reversible and irreversible visual impairment, most especially to the elderly. Through this proposed measure, the National Eye Service Program for the Elderly will be established which shall be implemented by the Department of Health (DOH) through its coordination to the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), thereby increasing the access of the elderly, even those in the far-flung areas, to quality eye care programs.


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



ERIC G. YAP



PAOLO Z. DUTERTE



EDVIC G. YAP

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**AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR A NATIONAL EYE SERVICE PROGRAM FOR THE ELDERLY
WITH FUNCTIONAL VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS**

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 “Eye Service Program for the Elderly Act”.

SEC. 2. *Definition of Terms* - For purposes of this Act, the term:

- a. “Eye services for the elderly” means the provision of medical and non-medical but essential services to elderly persons who have a functional visual impairment.
- b. “Functional visual impairment” means an impairment of sight that substantially interferes with an elderly person’s ability to perform specific daily living skills and tasks. Persons who are not regarded as legally blind, pursuant to this paragraph, but who experience such an impairment of sight, shall be deemed eligible for the program pursuant to this Act; and
- c. “Elderly” means an individual over sixty (60) years of age.

SEC. 4. *National Eye Service Program for the Elderly.* - There is hereby established a National Eye Service Program for the Elderly with functional visual impairments.

SEC. 5. *Implementing Agency.* - The Department of Health (DOH) shall implement the program enunciated in the preceding section of this Act in coordination with the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) as part of its services intended to benefit the elderly.

SEC. 6. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of the DOH shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 7. *Appropriations.* - The sum of Fifty Million Pesos (P50,000,000.00) is hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National Treasury for the first three (3) years of implementation of this Act immediately following its enactment. Thereafter, the sums necessary for the continuous implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual appropriations of the Department of Health as a separate and distinct item.

SEC. 8. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act shall be held unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, executive orders, rules and regulations inconsistent with or contrary to this Act are hereby deemed accordingly repealed or amended.

SEC. 10. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days from publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,