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SENATE

Senate Bill No. 1270

SECRETARY



INTRODUCED BY SEN. MANNY VILLAR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Epilepsy is a common condition, dating back thousands of years - the word epilepsy comes from ancient Greece. Yet it is still poorly understood. Some of the fallacies surrounding epilepsy are that it is contagious, untreatable and completely inherited. None of this is true.

Epilepsy is a disorder, not a disease. In about 70% of cases, it can be treated with medication, which can cost as little as US\$5 a year per person. In some cases, surgery can also be effective.

Epilepsy is the medical term used to describe a pattern of recurring seizures where an individual has no way of controlling bodily functions or unusual behavior.

The public often perceives epileptic seizures as signs of mental retardation, mental illness, and dangerous aggression causing the 30% unemployment rate in adults with the disorder, yet physically able to work.

Epilepsy can strike anyone at anytime, and in 70% of all cases, no known cause exists and although modern treatment methods can achieve full or partial control of seizures in 85% of all cases, some seizure disorders are resistant to current therapies.

Most people with epilepsy in the Asia-Pacific region suffer tremendous social stigma. Moreover, some 70% of the 30 million people with epilepsy in the region do not receive any treatment, although cheap medicines exist.

Awareness about epilepsy in the Asia-Pacific region is poor. Recent studies in the Philippines show up to 80% of people know little about it; similar figures exist for neighbouring countries.

Studies show that people with epilepsy have a lower income, lower educational performance, lower self-esteem and may be socially excluded in many of these countries.

Anything that damages the brain can cause epilepsy. Infectious diseases such as malaria, birth complications and malnutrition are more likely to cause it than genetics. No wonder then that the incidence of epilepsy is higher in poor countries. Yet more than 80% of the world's anti-epileptic drugs go to industrialized countries. This is partly due to poor health system infrastructure but also because epilepsy is not recognized as a priority in many developing countries.

Initial results of studies show that the incidence of epilepsy is higher than previously thought and about 70% of people with epilepsy receive no treatment.



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**AN ACT
DESIGNATING OCTOBER OF EACH YEAR AS
"EPILEPSY AWARENESS MONTH"**

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

SECTION 1. Title- This Act shall be known and cited as the "Epilepsy Awareness Month."

SECTION 2. The month of October is permanently designated as "Epilepsy Awareness Month" in the Philippines.

SECTION 3. The Department of Health shall urge all citizens to recognize "Epilepsy Awareness Month" and to observe the month with appropriate activities and programs that address the need for more research for improved treatments, a cure and ultimately, the prevention of epilepsy.

SECTION 4. The state recognizes the need to promote public awareness and understanding about epilepsy and to reinforce the need for more research to discover the causes of epilepsy, to improve diagnostic strategies, to create new drugs and to improve surgical techniques.

SECTION 5. Implementing Rules and Regulations.- The Department of Health shall promulgate the appropriate rules and regulations necessary for the effective implementation of this Act within sixty (60) days from its approval.

SECTION 6. Repealing Clause.- Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation

contrary to or inconsistent with the provision 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 the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.