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**SENATE**

Senate Bill No. 1273

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**INTRODUCED BY SEN. MANNY VILLAR**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Autism is a developmental disorder of brain function which is typically manifested in impaired social interaction, problems with verbal and nonverbal communication and imagination, and unusual or severely limited activities and interests. These symptoms generally appear during the first three years of childhood and continue throughout life, often taking devastating emotional and financial tolls on the family of the autistic child.

Best estimates indicate that one in 500 children born in the country will be diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder and that 12,000 individuals in the country have autism or an autism spectrum disorder. However, these numbers may be understated because of current diagnostic procedures and reporting requirements. There is a clear need for greater accuracy in reporting as well as for information on the epidemiologic data on the incidence and prevalence of autism in the country.

The State currently requires that a number of other conditions certain be reported and maintained in a central registry. A similar registry for autism is needed to improve current knowledge and understanding of autism, to conduct thorough and complete epidemiologic surveys of the disorder, to enable analysis of this problem and to plan for and provide services to children with autism and their families.

The approval of this bill is earnestly recommended.

  
**MANNY VILLAR**

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**AN ACT  
ESTABLISHING AUTISM REGISTRY**

*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 "Autism Registry Act".

**SECTION 2.** Duty of Health Care Professional- A physician, psychologist and any other health care professional licensed who is qualified by training to make the diagnosis and who then makes the diagnosis that a child is affected with autism shall report this diagnosis to the Department of Health in a form and manner prescribed by the Secretary of Health.

The report shall be in writing and shall include the name and address of the person submitting the report, the name, age and address of the child diagnosed as having autism, and other pertinent information as may be required by the Secretary.

A physician, psychologist or health care professional providing information to the department in accordance with this act shall not be deemed to be, or held liable for, divulging confidential information.

**SECTION 3.** Duty of the Department of Health- The Department shall establish and maintain an up-to-date registry which shall include a record of all reported cases of autism that occur in the country and any other information it deems relevant and appropriate in order to conduct thorough and complete epidemiologic surveys of autism, to enable analysis of this problem and to plan for and provide services to children with autism and their families.

**SECTION 4.** Exclusive Use of the Reports- The reports made pursuant to this act are to be used only by the Department of Health and other agencies as may be designated by the Secretary and shall not otherwise be divulged or made public so as to disclose the identity of any person to whom they relate;

and, to that end, the reports shall not be included under materials available to public inspections.

**SECTION 5. Prohibition-** Nothing in this act shall be construed to compel a child who has been reported as affected with autism to submit to medical or health examination or supervision by the Department.

**SECTION 6. Implementing Rules and Regulations-** The Secretary of Health shall promulgate such rules and regulations as may be necessary to implement the provisions of this Act within thirty (30) days after approval of this Act.

**SECTION 7. Appropriation-** There is appropriated from the general fund to the Department of Health Php 5,000,000.00 to effectuate the purposes of this Act.

**SECTION 8.** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in two (2) newspapers of general publication.

Approved.