Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7730

Introduced By Representative ALLAN BENEDICT S. REYES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

According to the World Health Organization ("WHO"), there is a proven relationship between oral and general health.\(^1\) For instance, diabetes mellitus is linked with the development and progression of periodontitis. There is also a causal link between high sugar consumption and diabetes, obesity and dental caries.

The Global Burden of Disease Study 2017 estimated that oral diseases affect 3.5 billion people worldwide, with untreated dental caries being among the most prevalent non-communicable diseases.\(^2\) In the Philippines, "the prevalence of dental caries on permanent teeth has generally remained above 90% throughout the years. About 92.4% of Filipinos have tooth decay (dental caries) and 78% have gum diseases (periodontal diseases)."\(^3\) Thus, oral disease continues to be a serious public health problem in the country.

To address this, the Department of Health ("DOH") formulated the Guidelines in the Implementation of Oral Health Program for Public Health Services (AO 2007-0007). The said Program aimed to reduce the prevalence rate of dental caries to 85% and periodontal disease by 60% by the end of 2016.\(^4\) The Program also provided "preventive, curative, and promotive dental health care to Filipinos through a lifecycle approach, that is, "a continuum of quality care by establishing a package of essential basic oral health care ("BOHC") for every lifecycle stage, starting from infancy to old age."\(^5\)

As early as February 1995, the National Health Insurance Program ("NHIP") was already established "to provide health insurance coverage and ensure affordable, acceptable, available and accessible health care services for all citizens of the

\(^1\) Oral health available at [https://www.who.int/health-topics/oral-health/](https://www.who.int/health-topics/oral-health/) (last accessed 19 September 2020).

\(^2\) Id.


\(^4\) Id.

\(^5\) Id.
Philippines. Administrated by the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation ("Philhealth"), the NHIP serves "as the means for the healthy to help pay for the care of the sick and for those who can afford medical care to subsidize those who cannot." Later on, or in February 2019, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte signed Republic Act No. 11223, or the Universal Health Care Act, into law. This Act automatically enrolled all Filipino citizens in the NHIP and prescribed complementary reforms in the health system. The Act also gave citizens "access to the full continuum of health services they need, while protecting them from enduring financial hardship as a result." 

Unfortunately, these pieces of legislation are still unable to ensure quality, affordable, accessible and available oral health care delivery to our Kababayans. In fact, one of the strategies and action points of the Dental Health Program of the DOH is to ensure financial access to essential public and personal oral health services by developing "an outpatient benefit package for oral health under the NHIP of the government." At present, however, Philhealth "only covers certain dental procedures done in hospitals, while health maintenance organizations ("HMOs") usually require extra premiums to include dental services." For outpatient care, dental services generally fall under "services of health care professionals" who can be any dentist or other health care professional or practitioner duly licensed to practice in the Philippines and accredited by Philhealth.

Consequently, many Filipinos are still unable to afford regular, accessible and quality dental health services. For instance, it is not uncommon in the Philippines to see individuals with missing teeth or what we usually refer to as "bungal." Meanwhile, the WHO has already warned that the "loss of teeth without replacement with dentures implies severe loss of oral functioning." This appears to be prevalent in the developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America where a poor dentate status reflects insufficient dental care and limited access to oral health services. In addition, WHO country reports indicate that there is "huge unmet need for denture treatment and restorative dental care, particularly among older people."

Thus, to address this serious public health problem, the Philippines needs a law that will expressly mandate that dental services, including oral checkup, consultation, oral

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7 Agency's Mandate And Functions available at https://www.philhealth.gov.ph/about_us/mandate.html#gsc.tab=0 (last accessed 19 September 2020).
11 Section 3(y)(2), Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act 7875 as amended Otherwise Known As the National Health Insurance Act of 2013.
13 Id.
prophylaxis, bonding, and/or dentures, are included in the categories of personal health services granted to Philhealth members and dependents as medically necessary or appropriate.

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

HON. ALLAN BENEDICT S. REYES
Representative
3rd District, Quezon City
Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City  

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS  
Second Regular Session  

HOUSE BILL NO. 7730  

Introduced By Representative ALLAN BENEDICT S. REYES  

AN ACT FURTHER AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7875, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS  
THE “NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE ACT OF 1995,” AS AMENDED, TO  
EXPRESSLY INCLUDE SPECIFIC DENTAL SERVICES IN THE CATEGORIES OF  
PERSONAL HEALTH SERVICES GRANTED TO PHILHEALTH MEMBERS OR  
DEPENDENTS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR  

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 “Dental Health Services  
Act of 2020.”  

SECTION 2. Dental Services. - Section 10 of Republic Act No. 7875, as amended,  
is hereby further amended to read as follows:  

"SEC. 10. Benefit Package – Subject to the limitations specified in this  
Act and as may be determined by the Corporation, the following categories of  
personal health services granted to the member or his dependent as medically  
necessary or appropriate shall include:  

a) Inpatient hospital care:  
1) room and board;  
2) services of health care professionals;  
3) dental services, including oral checkup, consultation, oral  
prophylaxis, bonding, and/or dentures;  
4) diagnostic, laboratory, and other medical examination services;  
5) use of surgical or medical equipment and facilities;  
6) prescription drugs and biologicals, subject to the limitations  
stated in Section 37 of this Act;  
7) inpatient education packages;  

b) Outpatient care:  
1) services of health care professionals;  
2) dental services, including oral checkup, consultation, oral  
prophylaxis, bonding, and/or dentures;  
3) diagnostic, laboratory, and other medical examinations services;  
4) personal preventive services; and  

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5) prescription drugs and biologicals, subject to the limitations described in Section 37 of this Act;

c) Emergency and transfer services; and
d) Such other health care services that the Corporation and the DOH shall determine to be appropriate and cost-effective.

These services and packages shall be reviewed annually to determine their financial sustainability and relevance to health innovations, with the end in view of quality assurance, increased benefits and reduced out-of-pocket expenditure."

SECTION 3. Implementing Rules and Regulations and Standard Forms. - Within sixty (60) days from the promulgation of this Act, the necessary rules and regulations for the proper implementation of its provisions shall be formulated by the appropriate government office or agency in coordination with all the stakeholders and covered establishments and institutions.

SECTION 4. Repealing Clause. - All laws, executive orders, administrative orders, rules, regulations, decrees, and other issuances or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby revoked, repealed, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 5. Separability Clause. - If any provision of this Act is held unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall continue in operation and remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 6. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication the Official Gazette or in the two (2) national newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,