

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6545



INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE ALFRED VARGAS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Drug overdose is defined as the accidental or intentional use of a drug or medicine in an amount that is higher than is normally used.

All drugs have the potential to be misused, whether legally prescribed by a doctor, purchase over-the-counter at drugstores, or bought illegally. Taken in combination with other drugs or with alcohol, even drugs that are normally considered safe can and may cause serious long term consequences and even death. The youth are particularly at risk for accidental overdose, accounting for over one million poisonings each year from drugs, alcohol, and other chemicals and toxic substances. People who suffer from depression and who have suicidal thoughts are also at high risk for drug overdose.

With the necessary information available and proper strategies in place, drug overdose can be prevented. Thus, this bill directs the Secretary of Health to study and submit a report to Congress on the incidence of and trends in drug overdose related deaths. The Secretary is also required to provide an annual advisory to local governments on the best practices and strategies for addressing drug overdose in their area.

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


ALFRED VARGAS

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AN ACT
PREVENTING DRUG OVERDOSE RELATED DEATHS

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 "*Drug Overdose Prevention Act*".

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is the policy of the State to promote the general welfare of the people. Pursuant to this policy, this Act seeks to prevent deaths caused by drug overdose by requiring the Secretary of Health to submit a report to Congress relating to the prevalence of drug overdose incidents, trends in drug overdose incidents and strategies for addressing such drug overdose incidents.

SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* - For purposes of this Act, the term:

- (A) "Department" means the Department of Health; and
- (B) "Drug Overdose" means the ingestion or application, whether intentional or accidental, of a drug or other substance in quantities greater than are recommended or generally practiced.
- (C) "Secretary" means the Secretary of Health.

SECTION 4. *Reporting Requirements.* - (A) The Secretary shall publish bi-annually, findings on nationwide drug overdose trends that reviews overdose death rates and other information to ascertain changes in the cause and rates of fatal drug overdoses for an appropriate period of time, based on information collected pursuant to the Act. The report shall also provide information on interventions that would be effective in reducing the rate of drug overdose.

- (B) The report shall include, at a minimum the following information:

- (1) Trends in drug overdose deaths;
- (2) Trends in emergency room utilization for the treatment of drug overdose;
- (3) Trends in utilization of pre-hospital and emergency services and the cost of emergency services utilization for drug overdose
- (4) Suggested improvements in data collection; and
- (5) A description of education efforts and other interventions that would be effective in reducing the rate of drug overdose

SECTION 5. *Advice Regarding Drug Overdose.* – The Secretary shall provide an annual advisory to municipal, city, and provincial official, which shall contain:

- (A) The prevalence of drug overdose incidents;
- (B) Trends in drug overdose incidents; and
- (C) Best practices and strategies for addressing drug overdose in their jurisdiction.

SECTION 6. *Mandatory Disclosure of Death by Drug Overdose.* Where a death is cause by a drug overdose, such information shall be reported by the examining physician or the person who supplies information for the death certificate, including any related or specific information concerning the drug or drugs responsible for the death, and any other information related to the overdose death as the Secretary shall require.

SECTION 7. *Unlawful Withholding or Failure to Disclose Drug Overdose Information; Violation; Penalties.* – (A) It shall be unlawful for a parent, spouse, child, sibling or next of kin to knowingly withholding, or fail to disclose, any information relating to the incident of drug overdose, information concerning the drug or drugs responsible for the death, and other information relating to the death caused by drug overdose.

(B) It shall likewise be unlawful for the hospital, health care facility, attending physician, or medico-legal in possession of such information to withhold or fail to disclose such when filing a report of the overdose victim's death. Such report shall be mandatory and the Secretary shall promulgate rules and regulations within ninety (90) days from the passage of this Act regarding the filing of such report.

(C) Any person convicted for unlawful withholding or failure to disclose information required in the preceding paragraph shall be penalized with a fine of Fifty Thousand Pesos (P50,000.00) but not more than Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (P500,000.00).

SECTION 8. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other provision hereof.

SECTION 9. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, and issuances, or portion thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby repealed amended or modified accordingly.

SECTION 10. *Effectivity Clause.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,