

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Resolution No. 1776



INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE ALFRED VARGAS

RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH TO CONDUCT INQUIRY, IN AID
OF LEGISLATION, ON THE COUNTRY'S IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM AND THE
REPORTED MEASLES OUTBREAK IN THE PHILIPPINES

WHEREAS, measles is a highly contagious viral disease with such symptoms as fever, cough and colds, inflamed eyes, spots found inside the mouth on the inner lining of the cheek, and rashes that can be found all over the body;

WHEREAS, according to an expert internist from the Makati Medical Center, a disease outbreak starts when majority of the people in a certain area are susceptible to the disease; it was further stated that the usual incubation period for the virus is two to three weeks and an outbreak can last for a few days or weeksⁱ;

WHEREAS, the Philippines last experienced a measles outbreak in 2014 when the country recorded a total of 58,010 cases and 110 deaths; this represented a nine-fold increase in the incidence of measles in the Philippines compared to 2013, when the total number of cases were 6,947 and 26 deathsⁱⁱ;

WHEREAS, on January 22, 2018, the local government of Davao declared a measles outbreak because more than 200 people showed signs they were suffering from the highly-contagious infection. The city health officer said that they had to declare an outbreak not only to raise awareness but also to emphasize the importance of performing immunization operations across the city for the reason that, out of the 224 cases of measles, 119 patients were not vaccinatedⁱⁱⁱ;

WHEREAS, on February 9, 2018, Zamboanga City Mayor Isabelle Climaco-Salazar declared a measles outbreak in the city as the local health office recorded 101 measles cases from January 1 to February 1, 2018, representing a 1,343-percent increase in the number of cases as compared to the same period last year^{iv};

WHEREAS, the Department of Health (DOH) attributed these outbreaks to "low vaccine coverage in the past years." With the aim of increasing the immunization

coverage, the DOH conducted selective catch-up vaccination in affected areas during the last quarter of 2017^v;

WHEREAS, it was reported that the controversy pertaining to the Dengvaxia vaccine was among the main reasons behind the refusal of some parents in those areas to avail of free vaccination for measles for their children^{vi};

WHEREAS, Article II Section 15 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution expressly provides that: "The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them;"

WHEREAS, it is further mandated in Article XIII Section 11 that: "The State shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall endeavor to make essential goods, health and other social services available to all the people at affordable cost..."

WHEREAS, the Department of Health is urged to coordinate with the local government health officials and civil society groups in order to intensify measles vaccination in the affected areas.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the House Committee on Health is hereby directed to immediately conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the country's immunization program and the reported measles outbreak in the Philippines.

Adopted,



ALFRED VARGAS

ⁱ Rappler (January 22, 2018), Measles outbreak declared in Davao City (www.rappler.com/nation/194278-measles-outbreak-declared-in-davao-city)

ⁱⁱ Robert Herriman, Outbreak News Today (outbreaknewstoday.com/Philippines)

ⁱⁱⁱ Rappler (January 22, 2018), Measles outbreak declared in Davao City (www.rappler.com/nation/194278-measles-outbreak-declared-in-davao-city)

^{iv} Bong Garcia, Sunstar.com.ph (February 12, 2018), Measles outbreak declared in Zamboanga City (<http://www.sunstar.com.ph/zamboanga/local-news/2018/02/12/measles-outbreak-declared-zamboanga-city-588565>)

^v Rappler (February 24, 2018), Measles outbreak declared in Zamboanga City (<https://www.rappler.com/nation/196790-measles-outbreak-zamboanga-city>)

^{vi} Rappler (January 22, 2018), Measles outbreak declared in Davao City (www.rappler.com/nation/194278-measles-outbreak-declared-in-davao-city)