

Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City

**EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS**  
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9910



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**Introduced by Honorable Michael L. Romero**

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### **EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Since last March 2020, the ongoing outbreak (**covid19 pandemic**) presents many serious concerns, especially on effective clinical and public health management specially on novel viruses that cross the species barrier. This is since that there are very few studies and limited information on viral pathogenesis; risk factors for infection; the natural history of disease including clinical presentation and outcomes; prognostic factors for severe illness; the period of infectivity; modes and extent of virus inter-human transmission; effective preventive measures; and public health response and containment interventions.

As of today, there is no treatment that can effectively eliminate COVID-19 yet although fast track research and development efforts, are ongoing across the world.

These are very threatening issues that can only be addressed using science and technology, specifically through research and development (**R&D**). It is therefore imperative that we establish a Research Institute that dives into the study of viruses and vaccines or the field of virology.

The country needs to act now to detect and control the spread of the existing viruses; vaccines to provide long-term protection; treatments to save lives in the shorter-term, implications.

This House Bill seeks to create a **Virology and Vaccine Institute**, defining its powers and functions, and providing appropriations therefor.

Thus, the early passage of this bill is earnestly requested.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Romero', written over a horizontal dashed line.

**MICHAEL L. ROMERO**

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AN ACT

CREATING THE VIROLOGY AND VACCINE INSTITUTE OF THE  
PHILIPPINES, DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS,  
PROVIDING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER  
PURPOSES

*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  
**Virology and Vaccine Institute of the Philippines.**

**SECTION 2. DECLARATION OF POLICY.** - It shall hereby be a  
declared the policy of the State:

a). To foster the right to health of the people and instill health  
consciousness among them;

b). To commence appropriate health, manpower development, and research, responsive to the country's health needs and problems; and

c). To prioritize research and development, invention, innovation, and their utilization for future endeavor.

The state is very cognizant, that the establishment of an institute that will conduct research and development activities/in-depth study on the viruses and the vaccines affecting the lives of its people and resources is vital for the protection of the health of its people and the preservation of all life.

**SECTION 3. CREATION OF THE VIROLOGY AND VACCINE INSTITUTE OF THE PHILIPPINES.** - To carry out the provisions of this Act, there shall hereby be created a *Virology and Vaccine Institute of the Philippines*. The institute shall serve as the leading research and development institute in the field of virology and vaccine, encompassing all areas in viruses and vaccines for humans, plants, and animals.

The institute shall act as a venue for scientists, both here and abroad, to work collaboratively to study viruses and vaccines in all fields and environmental importance.

The Institute shall establish strategic partnerships with the world's leading scientists, virology and vaccine centers.

The institutes shall conduct innovative and pioneering researches that will advance the frontiers of virology and vaccination in the country.

**SECTION 4. AUTHORITY.** - The Institute shall therefor implement policies, plans, programs, and projects for the development of virology and vaccine technology in the country for both the public and private sectors.

The institute shall ensure that the results of these activities are properly applied towards self-reliance and utilized to accelerate economic and social development towards the protection of the all its citizenry and its environment.

**SECTION 5. POWERS AND FUNCTIONS.** – The institute shall have the following powers and functions:

- a). Serve as the lead implementor of the Virology and Vaccine research;
- b). Foster the transfer of the results of scientific research and development to concerned government agencies, industry;
- c). Develop an information system on virology and vaccines technology for use by both the public and private sectors;
- d). Implement, together with other entities concerned, programs for strengthening research and development technological capabilities in virology and vaccination and other relevant disciplines through human resource development, infrastructure, and institution building;
- e). Provide laboratory and technical services on virology and vaccines; and
- f). Create linkages with local and international partners.

**SECTION 6. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE.** - The institute be an attached agency under the Department of Science and Technology (**DOST**) for purposes of policy and program coordination, and to ensure alignment in national policies and priorities.

The institute shall be composed of the following offices and divisions:

- a). Virology Research;
- b). Diagnostics and Statistics Research;
- c). Vaccines Research;
- d). Technical Services and Training;
- e). Policy, Planning, and Relations; and
- f). Finance and Administration

Subject to the approval of the Department of Budget and Management (**DBM**), the institute shall determine its organizational structure and create new divisions and staffing patterns as it may deem necessary.

**SECTION 7. THE SUPREME COUNCIL.** - The Supreme Council shall be the principal policy-making body for the research and development activities of the Institute. The institute shall be composed of the following:

- 1). Chairperson, Secretary of **DOST**;
- 2). Co-chairperson, Undersecretary for **R&D**, DOST;
- 3). Member, Undersecretary of Department of Health (**DOH**);
- 4). Member, Director of the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control; and
- 5). Member, Director of Philippine Virology and Vaccine Institute.

**SECTION 8. TRANSFER OF OFFICES AND UNITS.** - All offices and staffing under the DOST system that are handling matters related to virology and vaccination shall be transferred to the institute.

This mandatory transfer shall include the functions, appropriations, funds, records, equipment, facilities, choses in action, rights, other assets, and liabilities, if any.

**SECTION 9. INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCES.** - The institute shall enter into a memorandum of agreement or memorandum of understanding with international partners, upon the approval of its *Supreme Council*.

**SECTION 10. TO MAGNA CARTA BENEFITS.** - All Qualified employees of the institute shall be covered by **Republic Act No. 8439**, otherwise known as "*Magna Carta for Scientists, Engineers, Researchers and Other Science and Technology Personnel in Government*".

**SECTION 11. ANNUAL REPORT.** - The institute shall submit analysis and findings to the President and the Committee on Science and Technology in both Chambers of the Congress not later than the 15th of April of every year following the effectivity of this Act.

The report shall provide a detailed account of the status of the implementation of this Act and recommended legislation, where applicable and necessary.

**SECTION 12. APPROPRIATION.** - There shall hereby be created a Virology and Vaccine Research Fund to be used exclusively for the implementation of the Virology and Vaccine Institute Strategic Plan, following, existing government budgeting, prevailing accounting and auditing rules and regulations.

The Funding shall be sourced from the following:

- a). The initial amount of Ten **(10)** Billion pesos **(Php 10,000,000,000.00)** to be taken from the current fiscal year's appropriation, in the General Appropriation Act **(GAA)** that was approved on the year it was enacted;
- b). The income produced from its operations, technology transfer, and licensing agreements; and
- c). Loans, contributions, grants, bequests, gifts, and donations whether from local or foreign sources. Provided, that acceptance of grants, bequests, contributions, and donations from foreign governments shall be subject to the approval of the President upon the recommendation of the Secretary of the **DOST** and Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs **(DFA)**.

The Secretary of DOST, with the approval of the **NEDA** and subsequently, the Department of Finance **(DOF)**, is hereby granted the authority to enter into loan agreements with foreign financial institutions.

**SECTION 13. UTILIZATION OF INCOME.** - The institute shall be authorized to use all the income generated from its operations, as well as donations, bequests, grants for the upgrading of its physical and human resources, and for the augmentation of its budget, as needed.

**SECTION 14. TRANSITORY PROVISION** – Existing industries, businesses and offices affected by the implementation of this Act shall be given six **(6)** months transitory period from the effectivity of the IRR or such other period as may be determined, to comply with the requirements of this Act.

**SECTION 15. IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS.** – The departments and agencies charged with carrying out the provisions of this Act shall, within sixty **(60)** days after the effectivity of this Act, formulate the necessary rules and regulations for its effective implementation.

**SECTION 16. REPEALING CLAUSE.** – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

**SECTION 17. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE.** – If, for any reason, any section or provision of this Act is held unconstitutional or invalid, the other sections or provisions hereof shall not be affected thereby.

**SECTION 18. EFFECTIVITY CLAUSE.** – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days from its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation whichever comes earlier.

Approved,