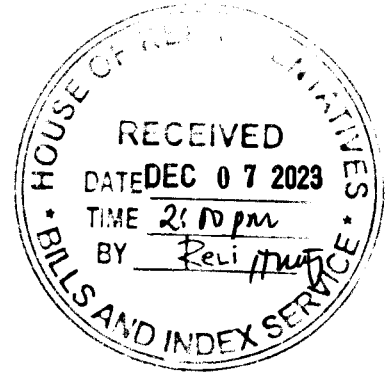


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9687



Introduced by **Representative Jaime R. Fresnedi**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to provide free hemodialysis, peritoneal dialysis, and other Department of Health (DOH) approved dialysis procedure to all senior citizens. It is a testament to our collective responsibility to confront the pressing healthcare crisis that Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) has cast upon our beloved Philippines, with its most heart-wrenching impacts felt by our revered senior citizens by embodying the heart and soul of our nation's commitment to our elderly citizens.

As we delve into the latest available data, we are confronted with a stark and alarming reality - CKD has emerged as a daunting public health challenge, afflicting around 2.3 million Filipinos.¹ The National Kidney and Transplant Institute (NKTi) estimates that one Filipino develops chronic kidney failure every hour or about 120 Filipinos per million population every year.² More profoundly, the elderly, the wise custodians of our heritage, find themselves bearing the brunt of this silent epidemic. In a nation that thrives on respect for its seniors, it is a somber fact that men and women from this age group grapple with the debilitating consequences of kidney disease.

The enormity of this crisis has been further amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic. It has thrown the spotlight on the pivotal role kidneys play in overall health. Research has laid bare the brutal truth - CKD patients, particularly our cherished senior citizens, face an elevated risk of severe complications and mortality when battling the virus. This was confirmed by Dr. Theresa Bad-ang, chairperson of the Renal Transplant Section of Nephrology of the Southern Philippines Medical Center (SPMC) during a press briefer last 2022. She mentioned that "There are so many people who are in dialysis right now. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the most vulnerable group are the patients (with) kidney (diseases)."³

¹<https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1177310>

² <https://nkti.gov.ph/index.php/patients-and-visitors/kidney-health-plus>


³ <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1177310>

In the past decade, the demand for dialysis has surged by an astonishing 400% and kidney failure has become one of the leading causes of hospitalization⁴, a chilling reminder of the growing need for kidney-related care in our homeland. CKD has ascended to the ranks of the leading causes of death among Filipino senior citizens, casting an ominous shadow over their golden years.

The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) recently released Circular Memo PC2023-0009⁵ expanding this year its coverage for outpatient hemodialysis from last year's 144 sessions to 156 sessions. This covers adequate dialysis for CKD Stage 5 patients which requires three 4-hour sessions every week. This representation recognizes this great initiative but since this is not yet mandated by law, this can change based on the whims and caprices of whoever is seated on the PhilHealth board. Benefit coverage should only increase, not decrease and we need to make sure that this continues to be a priority. By prioritizing patients' needs and continuously striving to improve services, we ultimately improve the overall quality of healthcare in the country.

With the "*Free Dialysis for Senior Citizens Act of 2023*," we fortify our unflinching dedication to safeguarding the health and well-being of our senior citizens. Our elderly have selflessly sown the seeds of our nation's prosperity, and they deserve nothing less than comprehensive, affordable, and equitable healthcare services. This legislation is our pledge, our solemn commitment to inclusivity, equitable access to healthcare, and our resolute dedication to uplift the lives of our senior citizens during their time of need. In passing this law, we unite under our national flag, reaffirming the bonds that tie us as a people and echoing the resounding call to action for our beloved senior citizens who have paved the way for our nation's greatness.⁶

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


JAIME R. FRESNEDI
Representative
Lone District, Muntinlupa City

⁴ <https://ajkdblog.org/2020/07/06/dialysis-care-in-asia-how-does-the-philippines-fare/>

⁵ <https://www.philhealth.gov.ph/circulars/2023/PC2023-0009.pdf>

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR FREE HEMODIALYSIS, PERITONEAL DIALYSIS, AND OTHER
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH APPROVED DIALYSIS PROCEDURES TO ALL
SENIOR CITIZENS

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 the "*Free Dialysis for Senior Citizens Act of 2023*".

SEC. 2. *Free Dialysis Sessions for All Senior Citizens.* – The cost of the needed hemodialysis, peritoneal dialysis, and other Department of Health (DOH) approved dialysis procedure shall be reimbursed by the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), *Provided*, That such treatment is availed of at PhilHealth-accredited hospitals and freestanding dialysis centers: *Provided further*, That only those procedures that use the dialysis solutions included in the latest edition of the Philippine National Drug Formulary (PNDF) shall be reimbursed by the PhilHealth: *Provided finally*, That only laboratory procedures and supplies considered necessary shall be covered by the PhilHealth. PhilHealth shall as soon as possible reimburse all official receipts for drugs, supplies, and laboratory procedures dated thirty (30) days prior to the date of the claimed session.

SEC. 3. *Appropriations.* – The amount needed for the implementation of this Act shall be charged against the appropriations of the DOH and the PhilHealth in the current and subsequent General Appropriations Act and their own respective funds. Thereafter, the amount needed for the continued implementation of this Act shall be Included in the budget of the concerned departments in the annual General Appropriations.

SEC. 4. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within thirty (30) days from the approval of this Act, the DOH, the PhilHealth, and the National Commission on Senior Citizens (NCSC), In coordination with other Implementing agencies, shall formulate rules and guidelines as may be necessary for the proper implementation and enforcement of this Act.

SEC. 5. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part thereof is declared unconstitutional, the remainder of this act or any provision not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 6. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, acts, decrees, executive orders, issuances, and rules and regulations or parts thereof which are contrary to and inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 7. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect immediately following its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,