

HONORABLE RONALD “BATO” M. DELA ROSA
Chairperson
Committee on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs
Senate of the Philippines
Pasay City

Dear **Senator DELA ROSA**,

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) supports **Senate Bills Numbered 202, 428, and 957** on the “**Establishment of Drug Abuse Treatment and Rehabilitation Center**”, introduced by the Chairperson, Senators Christopher Lawrence “Bong” Go, and Grace Poe, respectively, that seek to strengthen the country’s public health approach in the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of drug abuse by amending specific provisions of Republic Act No. 9165 or the “**Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002**” and expand the duties and responsibilities of the Department of Health (DOH) with regard to the regulation and administration of drug rehabilitation centers.

To contribute to the bills’ enhancement, the DSWD respectfully recommends the following:

General Comments

1. To consolidate all the bills into one.
2. To amend Republic Act No. 9165 or the “Comprehensive Dangerous Drug Act of 2002” instead of having a new stand-alone law/bill, e.g. SBN 428.
3. To define the following as these are not defined in R.A. No. 9165:
 - 3.1 Drug Dependents; and
 - 3.2 Apex Treatment Rehabilitation Centers

On SBN 202

1. **Sec. 4. Section 47 of Republic Act No. 9165 (Publication and Distribution of Materials on Dangerous Drugs)**

To adopt the National Drug Abuse Prevention Program in all government offices, such Program shall be monitored and implemented by the Board and the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

2. Sec. 5. Section 54 of Republic Act No. 9165 (Voluntary Submission of a Drug Dependent to [Confinement] Treatment and Rehabilitation)

To retain or set a maximum duration of rehabilitation period to avoid prolonged and unreasonable stay in the rehabilitation centers.

3. Sec. 7. Section 75 of Republic Act No. 9165 (Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers)

To have the Department of Health (DOH) administer the Drug Rehabilitation Center in each province and highly urbanized city by identifying the Local Government Units (LGUs) needing centers, to ensure that the operation of the center is sustained. There should be a baseline data on the number of drug dependents per region in consideration of cost effectiveness in allocating funds.

4. Sec. 8. Section 76 of Republic Act No. 9165 (Duties and Responsibilities of the DOH)

3.1 To change "DSWD" to "coordination with other concerned agencies, Local Government Units (LGU), Civil Society Organizations (CSO), and private institutions". This is to give emphasis that drug rehabilitation, intervention, after-care and follow-up programs, projects and activities should be a whole of society approach.

3.2 To consider separating the function of (a) licensing and accrediting of drug test network and laboratory (b) conduct and support of scientific research on drugs and drug control as these two functions differ from each other.

5. Sec. 9. Creation of the Bureau on Drug Abuse Prevention and Control

To ensure organizational rightsizing along with the other mandates of the Department as well as possible replication of functions among the different bureaus, agencies and inter-agency committees with stakes in drug abuse prevention and control.

6. Sec. 10. Appropriations

To consider including in this Section appropriations for the establishment of Regional Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers and not only funds for the creation of a Bureau on Drug Abuse Prevention and Control.

On SBN 428

1. Section 1. Creation

To consider the establishment of Centers in every region, instead of per province, considering the huge budget required to maintain 81 provincial centers.

2. Sec. 2. Objectives and Functions

To use "support groups" instead of the terms "organization" and "association" as it may be understood that registration is needed to recognize their existence.

3. Sec. 4. Organization

To include additional necessary qualifications for appointing the Director and Deputy Director such as being a Filipino citizen and resident of the province or city for at least one year.

4. Sec. 5. Personnel and Staff

To include a clinical social worker as among the essential personnel of the center.

5. Sec. 6. Five-year Development Plan

5.1 To enumerate the functions of the Center in a separate Section.

5.2 To develop a continuing and effective program, with the end in view of achieving reintegration of fully recovered drug dependents who can live peacefully, harmoniously, and productively, with their respective communities.

5.3 On letter (c), to include students and interns of social work, psychologists and other allied professions and to not limit the provision of educational facilities for students of medicine only.

6. Sec. 7. Government Assistance to the Center

To consider stating under Section 7 the different after care services that will be provided for drug dependents or to recovering persons who used drugs (RPWUDs).

7. Sec. 9. Appropriations

To have the local government units take the responsibility of establishing their own centers in the region.

On SBN 957

1. General Comments

To strengthen the public health approach of the country under prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of drug abuse cases through amendment of specific provisions of RA 9165. A Bureau is proposed to be created to focus on its operation and management in compliance with the DOH Policy, programs and standards, and monitoring and evaluation of services provided to target clients.

2. Sec. 2. A new Section 75(A) is hereby inserted under Article VIII of Republic Act No. 9165 (Functions of Drug Rehabilitation Centers)

To rephrase the statement to be read as follows:

"To assist and support the recovery of patients and design appropriate interventions to minimize relapse and return to drug dependence."

This is in consideration that drug rehabilitation centers cannot ensure that drug users will not go back into drug use and dependence after they leave the center whether they finished the treatment program or not.

3. Sec. 4. Section 76, Article VIII of Republic Act No. 9165

To include in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (1) the standards for rehabilitation centers to comply, (2) process of accreditation of rehabilitation centers, and (3) process of monitoring of these centers.

This is being submitted for the Chairperson's consideration.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

REX GATCHALIAN
Secretary
Date: MAR 24 2023