

Republic of the Philippines  
Department of Social Welfare and Development

IBP Road, Batasan Pambansa Complex, Constitution Hills, Quezon City 1126

Telephone Nos. (632) 931-8101 to 07; Telefax (632) 931-8191

E-mail: osec@dswd.gov.ph

Website: <http://www.dswd.gov.ph>

30 January 2017

**REPRESENTATIVE ANGELINA "HELEN" D.L. TAN, M.D.**

Chairperson  
Committee on Health  
House of Representatives  
Quezon City

Dear Representative Tan:

The Department of Social Welfare and Development supports House Bill Nos 53, 253, 538, 581, 663, 1106, 1804, 1973, 2023, 2511, 2674, 3161, 3146, 3536, 3978 and 4276 which seek to strengthen the government's policy on Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

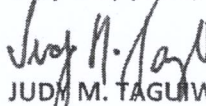
To contribute to the bills' enhancement, we recommend the following:

1. Consolidate the bills into one.
2. Under **Definition of Terms**:
  - a. Include the following terms:
    - i. *"Children - refers to person below eighteen (18) years of age or those over but are unable to fully take care of themselves or protect themselves from abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation or discrimination because of a physical or mental disability or condition"* as defined under Republic Act No. 7610.
    - ii. *"Indigent - A person who has no visible means of income, or whose income is insufficient for the subsistence of his family, as identified by the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTSPR)."*
  - b. On civil society organizations (CSOs): Consider indicating that CSOs should be duly registered, licensed and/or accredited as a way to establish their legal identity.
  - c. On Person living with HIV: Add the term AIDS after HIV.
3. Under **Functions of the Philippine National AIDS Council (PNAC)**: Consider the following as part of the functions:
  - a. Establishment of a comprehensive HIV and AIDS Monitoring System.

- b. Provision of technical assistance and capacity building to organized groups working for the welfare of identified key populations.
  - c. Monitoring of newly introduced medical interventions.
4. Under **Prevention**: Consider the following provisions:
- a. Mobilization of group of volunteers to be active agents for HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention.
  - b. HIV/AIDS awareness in establishments where high cases of transmission take place i.e. bars and motels.
5. Under **Voluntary Testing**:
- a. Considering the evolving capacities of the child, our Department agrees that a child who is 15 but below 18 years old may voluntarily subject himself/herself to HIV testing without the need to inform his/her parents or legal guardians. Provided, that proper pre- and post-HIV counseling is extended to the said child by a licensed social worker, licensed health service provider or a DOH-accredited health service provider. This specifically holds true for children at higher risk of HIV exposure who refuse to subject themselves to HIV testing because of certain parental requirements despite the fact that the conduct of testing is for their best interest and welfare.
  - b. The result of the HIV testing or HIV-related testing shall be released only to the individual who submitted to the test upon a receipt of post-testing counseling. If a patient is below 15 years old, an orphan or is mentally incapacitated, the result may be released to either of the patient's parents, legal guardian or a duly assigned social worker whichever is applicable.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

  
JUDY M. TAGUIWALO  
Secretary