

QC solon seeks issuance of 'e-vaccine cards' for fully vaccinated Filipinos

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A bill seeking to mandate the issuance of electronic vaccine cards to all fully vaccinated Filipinos has been filed in the House of Representatives.

House Bill No. 9957, filed by Quezon City Rep. Precious Hipolito Castelo last Wednesday, August 11, proposes to amend Republic Act No. 11525, the COVID-19 Vaccination Program Act.

Castelo said the use of “e-vaccine cards” would ensure a “safe and unimpeded mobility” in the Philippines and abroad.

“Unfortunately, the delegation of the printing of vaccine cards to local government units (LGUs) and private entities made it logistically difficult to implement the issuance of uniform vaccine cards throughout the country. For every LGU, there appears to be different format and design for the vaccine cards,” she said in a statement.

Castelo said the lack of a uniform vaccination document has already caused a problem for overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) leaving for their jobs in Hong Kong. Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. said Hong Kong refused to recognize the different LGU-issued cards.

But reports later stated that Hong Kong will now honor vaccination cards issued in the Philippines.

Castelo added that the absence of a uniform card is also causing problems for domestic travelers, whose destinations find it difficult to check the authenticity of their vaccination documents.

“We must use all available modern technology to protect our people from COVID-19,” she stressed.

The bill tasks the Department of Health (DOH) to “maintain a central database of vaccinations and mandate a uniform format for the vaccine card.”

“The e-vaccine cards shall be in uniform format throughout the country, regardless of where the original vaccine cards were issued. The e-vaccine card will ensure the safe mobility of vaccinated individuals, locally and internationally, and will prevent the proliferation of counterfeit cards since authentication can easily be done through the database,” Castelo explained.

The e-card would be available free of charge to fully vaccinated Filipinos and might be used for purposes other than travel, she added.