



# OFFICE OF PARLIAMENT

Hon. Francis-Xavier Kojo Sosu (Esq)  
MP, Madina Constituency



Office of Parliament  
Parliament House  
Room No. F2T 02E 019  
Osu, Accra, Ghana

Your Ref.....

My Ref.....

## MEMO

**TO:** THE CLERK TO PARLIAMENT

**FROM:** THE HONOURABLE MEMBER FOR MADINA  
(HON. FRANCIS-XAVIER KOJO SOSU)

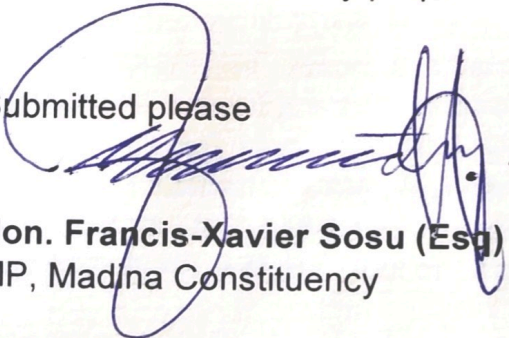
**SUBJECT:** INITIATION OF AMENDMENT TO NHIS ACT, TO  
PROVIDE FOR FREE CANCER AND TUMOUR  
TREATMENT FOR CHILDREN

**DATE:** 7<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022

Sir, I wish to request the Legislative Drafting Office to draft for subsequent submission to the Speaker, Bill to **provide for free cancer and tumour treatment for children holding valid NHIS card in all public and private hospitals with requisite expertise and experience to deal with such conditions and to provide for related matters.**

Please find attached my proposal for the said Bill.

Submitted please

  
**Hon. Francis-Xavier Sosu (Esq)**  
MP, Madina Constituency

# FREE CANCER TREATMENT FOR CHILDREN HOLDING VALID NHIS CARD

## PROPOSAL FOR AMENDMENT OF NHI ACT, 2012 (ACT 852)

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### Background

Over the years in Ghana, as in most developing countries, the burden of non-communicable diseases is increasing rapidly whilst infectious diseases continue to pose major challenges. The World Health Organization estimates that, globally, more than 11 million people are diagnosed with cancer every year. Cancer causes 7 million deaths every year - or 12.5% of the 58 million deaths worldwide - this being more than the combined total deaths from HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria. The Global Cancer Incidence, Mortality and Prevalence (GLOBOCAN) estimates that 16,600 cases of cancer occur annually in Ghana, yielding an age-standardized rate of 109.5 cases per 100,000 persons.

While childhood cancers only account for about 1% of all cancers, a 2015 review of cancer registries across 18 African countries found that the proportion of childhood cancers out of all cancers ranged from 1.4% in Ghana to 10% in neighbouring countries. As a result, there are projected to be over 1,000 new cases of childhood cancer in Ghana every year, with only about 300 of these children receiving any form of treatment due to poor health accessibility and health-seeking behaviors. This situation is common across sub-Saharan Africa.

In higher-income countries, health insurance provides access to health care that would otherwise be unaffordable. In 2003, Ghana initiated a national health insurance scheme. But 19 years later, childhood cancers are still not covered — despite recent studies demonstrating that the treatment of childhood cancers in Ghana is cost-effective, at over \$1,500 for each disability-adjusted life-year averted.

While childhood cancer might be considered a death sentence with about 20 percent survival rate in lower and middle-income countries, it is very manageable in high-income countries, with almost 90 per cent survival rate. In a study published in 2016, researchers identified two major barriers to seeking care for childhood cancer in Ghana: a lack of community knowledge about cancer and cultural practices and religious beliefs. Many patients will seek care from alternative medicines and spiritual healers before visiting health care facilities. This leads to late presentation and poor prognosis. But when cancers are identified and treated in a timely manner, results from other areas of the world show that around 7 out of 10 or even as many as 9 out of 10 children can

survive. It is based on the foregoing that the International Childhood Cancer Day (ICCD) was instituted to create awareness of childhood cancer to express support for children and adolescents with cancer, the survivors and their families.

Despite efforts by Government to provide assistance to children through coverage of the diagnosis and treatment of four childhood cancers, comprising Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia, Burkitt Lymphoma, Retinoblastoma and Wilms Tumour, which constitutes approximately 60 percent of all childhood cancers and are highly curable if detected early, there is no currently no legislation to back such efforts.

According to the 2021 census results, 68.6% of the population are covered by either the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) or private health insurance schemes. Considering that children with cancer represent the most vulnerable among us, it is our moral imperative to improve access to treatment and expand access to healthcare coverage for childhood cancers within the national health insurance scheme, hence the purpose of this Bill.

**NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2022  
PROPOSED CLAUSES FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION**

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**NEW CLAUSE – Proposes Amendment to Section 34 of Act 852 to provide Health Insurance Coverage for treatment of Children Suffering from Cancer and Tumour**

**Currently Section 34 of Act 852 provides for Service list and service tariff as follows:**

- (1) The Authority shall in collaboration with Health Care providers develop a National Health Insurance Scheme Service List and Service Tariff for use within the Scheme.
- (2) The Authority shall review the National Health Insurance Scheme Service List and Service Tariff each year in consultation with the healthcare providers and with the approval of the Minister.
- (3) The Authority, in the review of the National Health Insurance Scheme Service List and Service Tariff, may add or delete diagnoses, procedures and examinations, their classification and grouping and review of their prices.

**PROPOSAL FOR AMENDMENT OF Section 34 to include a sub-session as follows:**

**CLAUSE 1**

The cost of treatment of children suffering from cancer and tumour shall be included in the National Health Insurance Service List agreed to by the Authority and Health Care providers under Section 34 (1).

**CLAUSE 2**

**A person(s) who parades a child with tumour or cancerous condition in any public place with the intention to solicit for money for the treatment of the said child shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine.**

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is clear that a policy such as this will go a long way to ensure a more inclusive and progressive society and aid efforts to achieve SDG 3. This Bill will also ensure that rights of vulnerable persons especially children suffering from cancer and tumour are preserved, as they would be fairly treated by the state, and protected under the law. This memorandum therefore seeks to propose a new law that will be very clear that every child suffering from cancer and tumour will be entitled to free medical care once they are holders of valid NHIS Cards.

Also, this law would help reinforce and complement existing laws and several other major international conventions and protocols that Ghana has ratified related to child cancer, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UDHR (1948), Convention on Rights of the Child, and World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer (GICC), among others.



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