

ASSEMBLY HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 1321

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: OCTOBER 15, 2026

The Assembly Health Infrastructure Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 1321.

As amended, the bill requires the Department of Health (department), in consultation with the State Office of Emergency Management, to revise the department's Pandemic Influenza Plan, or its successor plan.

The bill requires the department to revise the plan to:

(1) expand the scope of the emergencies anticipated by the plan to cover long-running and large-scale pandemic influenzas;

(2) address each capability as outlined in the most recent United States Department of Health and Human Services Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Capabilities: National Standards for State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Public Health, or such successor guidance as may be promulgated by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;

(3) outline the specific roles, succession plans, decision rights, and operational responsibilities of each State agency during a public health emergency involving a pandemic influenza;

(4) outline the department's approach to coordinating each element of a pandemic influenza emergency response with local health departments in New Jersey;

(5) establish or identify crisis standards of care to guide the healthcare response to pandemic influenzas in the State; and

(6) incorporate strategies to address any health equity gaps related to pandemic influenzas, including any gaps that were identified during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In revising the plan pursuant to the bill, the department will solicit input from the Governor's Office, local health departments, health care facilities and providers with relevant expertise, and other key public health stakeholders as determined by the department.

The plan will be subject to regular review by the department and the State Office of Emergency Management and will be updated on a regular basis as may be appropriate. The plan will be utilized by the department and the State Office of Emergency Management to design regular emergency response training exercises related to pandemic influenzas.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2026-2027 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments require Department of Health to also solicit input from health care facilities and providers with relevant expertise with respect to revising its Pandemic Influenza Plan.