

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 4004

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 4, 2020

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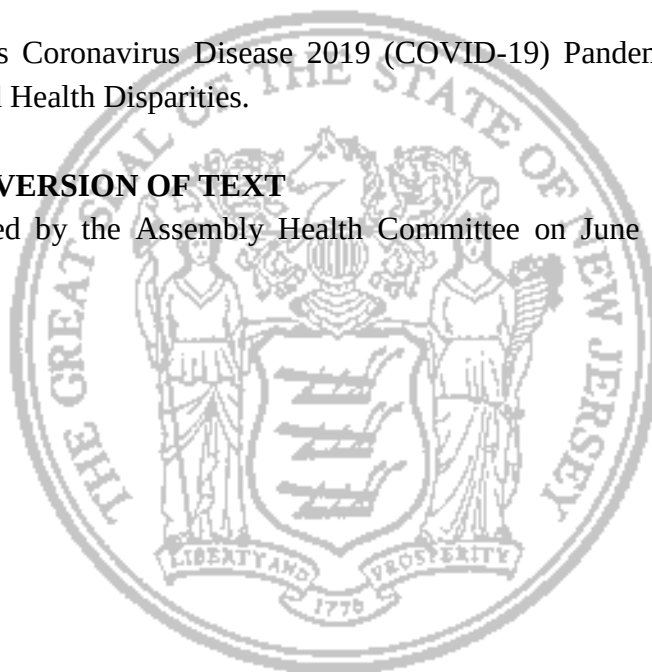
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SYNOPSIS

Establishes Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic Task Force on Racial and Health Disparities.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Assembly Health Committee on June 22, 2020, with amendments.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/29/2020)

1 AN ACT establishing the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
 2 Pandemic Task Force on Racial and Health Disparities.

3
 4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
 5 *of New Jersey:*

6
 7 1. There is established the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-
 8 19) Pandemic Task Force on Racial and Health Disparities in the
 9 Department of Health.

10 a. The task force shall consist of ¹~~15~~ 21¹ members as follows:

11 (1) the Chief Diversity Officer of New Jersey; a representative of
 12 the Department of Health whose duties or expertise includes
 13 expanding access by minority populations to clinically appropriate
 14 healthcare services or eliminating discrimination in the
 15 implementation of healthcare programs, policies, or initiatives; ¹a
 16 representative of the Department of Community Affairs; a
 17 representative of the Department of Human Services; a representative
 18 of the Department of Children and Families; a representative of the
 19 Housing and Mortgage Financing Agency;¹ and a representative of the
 20 Office of Emergency Management;

21 (2) two members of the Senate, one of whom shall be a member of
 22 the New Jersey Black Legislative Caucus, and one of whom shall be a
 23 member of the New Jersey Latino Caucus, appointed by the Senate
 24 President;

25 (3) two members of the General Assembly, one of whom shall be a
 26 member of the New Jersey Black Legislative Caucus, and one whom
 27 shall be a member of the New Jersey Latino Caucus, appointed by the
 28 Speaker of the General Assembly; and

29 (4) ¹~~8~~ ten¹ public members appointed by the Governor, who
 30 shall include: a representative of the New Jersey Institute for Social
 31 Justice; a representative of a federally qualified health center; a
 32 physician licensed to practice in this State who specializes in providing
 33 care to patients in the State's minority and vulnerable communities; a
 34 nurse licensed to practice in this State who specializes in providing
 35 care to patients in the State's minority and vulnerable communities
 36 who may be a school nurse; a representative of a general hospital
 37 located in the State's minority and vulnerable communities ¹with
 38 direct experience working with minority and vulnerable communities;
 39 a representative of the Maternal and Child Health Consortia¹; a
 40 representative of the New Jersey Urban Mayor's Association; and
 41 ¹~~two~~ three¹ representatives of ¹~~two~~ three¹ different non-profit
 42 organizations that conduct research, education, and training on, and
 43 develop policy initiatives to ¹~~the~~ address^{1,1} health equity in this
 44 State.

45 b. Vacancies in the membership of the task force shall be filled in

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Assembly AHE committee amendments adopted JUNE 22, 2020.

1 the same manner provided for the original appointments. The public
2 members of the task force shall serve without compensation but may
3 be reimbursed for traveling and other miscellaneous expenses
4 necessary to perform their duties within the limits of funds made
5 available to the task force for its purposes.

6 c. The task force shall organize as soon as practicable after the
7 appointment of its members and shall select a chairperson and vice-
8 chairperson from among its members. The chairperson shall appoint a
9 secretary who need not be a member of the task force.

10 d. The task force may meet at the call of its chairperson and hold
11 hearings, remotely, as appropriate, by telephone, computer, or other
12 means of live audio or video communication, at the times and in the
13 places it deems appropriate and necessary to fulfill its charge. The
14 task force shall be entitled to call to its assistance, and avail itself of
15 the services of the employees of, any State, county, or municipal
16 department, board, bureau, commission, or agency as it may require
17 and as may be available to it for its purposes.

18 e. The Chief Diversity Officer of New Jersey shall consult with
19 members of the Governor's cabinet on matters related to the functions
20 of the task force, and shall invite representatives of any State
21 department to attend hearings called by the chairperson of the task
22 force, as appropriate.

23 f. The Department of Health shall provide staff services to the
24 task force.

25
26 2. The purpose of the task force shall be to:

27 a. conduct a thorough and comprehensive study on the reasons
28 how the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected the
29 State's minority and vulnerable communities, and the short-term and
30 long-term consequences of the pandemic on these communities;

31 b. improve existing data systems to ensure that the health
32 information that is collected relating to COVID-19 infections and
33 deaths, ¹~~include~~ includes specific race, ethnicity, and demographic
34 identifiers to develop a better statistical understanding of how the
35 COVID-19 pandemic has affected the State's minority and vulnerable
36 communities;

37 c. evaluate the issues relating to the quality of, and access to,
38 ¹physical and mental treatment and services provided to various racial
39 and ethnic populations in the State during the COVID-19 pandemic;
40 and

41 d. develop effective strategies to:

42 (1) address the racial, ethnic, and health disparities, and historical
43 and systematic inequalities pertaining to race and ethnicity that have
44 amplified the death rate in the State's minority and vulnerable
45 communities during the COVID-19 pandemic; ¹~~and~~

46 (2) reduce and eliminate disparities among the various racial and
47 ethnic populations within the State's minority and vulnerable
48 communities with respect to health status, access to high-quality health
49 care, and utilization of health care services ¹;

1 e. hold a minimum of three public hearings, either in-person or
2 remotely, as appropriate, by telephone, computer, or other means of
3 live audio or video communication, with at least one hearing to be held
4 in the northern, southern, and central regions of the State, to solicit and
5 receive testimony from community members based on their
6 experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic;

7 f. evaluate communications, messages, and modes of
8 dissemination regarding testing, contact tracing, and other related
9 public health matters to achieve health care equity and cultural
10 competence;

11 g. evaluate impediments that may interfere with an individual's
12 ability to quarantine or isolate;

13 h. analyze the distribution of resources, including personal
14 protective equipment and food, in the State's minority and vulnerable
15 communities;

16 i. examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the
17 physical and mental health of essential employees;

18 j. examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on access to
19 child care services;

20 k. investigate the prevalence of intimate partner violence during
21 the COVID-19 pandemic; and

22 l. identify best practices, opportunities for shared services, or
23 potential partnerships that would increase the communication of health
24 care information and materials in multiple languages for individuals,
25 including persons with developmental disabilities and senior citizens¹.
26

27 3. a. No later than one year after the public health emergency
28 declared pursuant to P.L.2005, c.222 (C.26:13-1 et seq.) in response
29 to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is lifted, the task force
30 shall report to the Governor and, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991,
31 c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the Legislature, on the activities of the task
32 force and its findings and recommendations on strategies to:

33 (1) address the racial, ethnic, and health disparities and
34 historical and systematic inequalities pertaining to race and
35 ethnicity that have amplified the death rate in the State's minority
36 and vulnerable communities during the COVID-19 pandemic;

37 (2) address the short- and long-term consequences of the
38 COVID-19 pandemic on the State's minority and vulnerable
39 communities; and

40 (3) reduce and eliminate disparities among the various racial
41 and ethnic populations within the State's minority and vulnerable
42 communities with respect to health status, access to high-quality
43 health care, and utilization of health care services.

44 b. The task force shall expire 30 days after the issuance of its
45 report.
46

47 4. This act shall take effect immediately.