

P.L. 2021, CHAPTER 106, *approved June 11, 2021*
Assembly, No. 4004 (*Fifth Reprint*)

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~~ ⁵~~21~~¹ ~~23~~⁵ members as
11 follows:

12 (1) the Chief Diversity Officer ³~~of New Jersey~~³; a
13 representative of the Department of Health whose duties or
14 expertise includes expanding access by minority populations to
15 clinically appropriate healthcare services or eliminating
16 discrimination in the implementation of healthcare programs,
17 policies, or initiatives; ¹a representative of the Department of
18 Community Affairs; a representative of the Department of Human
19 Services; a representative of the Department of Children and
20 Families; a representative of the Housing and Mortgage Financing
21 Agency;¹ ⁵a representative of the Division of Consumer Affairs in
22 the Department of Law and Public Safety; a representative of the
23 Division on Civil Rights in the Department of Law and Public
24 Safety;⁵ and a representative of the Office of Emergency
25 Management;

26 (2) two ⁴public⁴ members ⁴~~of~~ ⁴appointed by⁴ the ⁵Governor,
27 upon recommendation by the⁵ Senate ⁴President⁴, one of whom
28 shall be ⁴~~a member~~ ⁵~~appointed~~ ⁵recommended⁵ based on the
29 recommendation⁴ of the New Jersey Black Legislative Caucus, and
30 one of whom shall be ⁴~~a member~~ ⁵~~appointed~~ ⁵recommended⁵
31 based on the recommendation⁴ of the New Jersey Latino Caucus ⁴~~,~~
32 appointed by the Senate President⁴;

33 (3) two ⁴public⁴ members ⁴appointed by the ⁵Governor, upon
34 recommendation by the⁵ Speaker⁴ of the General Assembly, one of
35 whom shall be ⁴~~a member~~ ⁵~~appointed~~ ⁵recommended⁵ based on
36 the recommendation⁴ of the New Jersey Black Legislative Caucus,

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.

²Senate SHH committee amendments adopted October 8, 2020.

³Senate floor amendments adopted October 29, 2020.

⁴Senate floor amendments adopted January 28, 2021.

⁵Assembly amendments adopted in accordance with Governor's
recommendations May 17, 2021.

1 and one whom shall be ⁴~~['a member']~~ ⁵~~['appointed']~~ recommended⁵
2 ~~based on the recommendation~~⁴ of the New Jersey Latino Caucus ⁴~~['~~,
3 appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly⁴ ; and

4 (4) ¹~~['8']~~ ~~ten~~¹ public members appointed by the Governor, who
5 shall include: a representative of the New Jersey Institute for Social
6 Justice; a representative of a federally qualified health center; a
7 physician licensed to practice in this State who specializes in
8 providing care to patients in the State's minority and vulnerable
9 communities; a nurse licensed to practice in this State who
10 specializes in providing care to patients in the State's minority and
11 vulnerable communities who may be a school nurse; a
12 representative of a general hospital located in the State's minority
13 and vulnerable communities ¹~~with direct experience working with~~
14 ~~minority and vulnerable communities~~; a representative of the
15 ~~Maternal and Child Health Consortia~~¹; a representative of the New
16 Jersey Urban Mayor's Association; and ¹~~['two']~~ ~~three~~¹
17 representatives of ¹~~['two']~~ ~~three~~¹ different non-profit organizations
18 that conduct research, education, and training on, and develop
19 policy initiatives to ¹~~['~~, ¹~~']~~ address¹, ¹health equity in this State.

20 b. Vacancies in the membership of the task force shall be filled
21 in the same manner provided for the original appointments. The
22 public members of the task force shall serve without compensation
23 but may be reimbursed for traveling and other miscellaneous
24 expenses necessary to perform their duties within the limits of funds
25 made available to the task force for its purposes.

26 c. The task force shall organize as soon as practicable after the
27 appointment of its members and shall select a chairperson and vice-
28 chairperson from among its members. The chairperson shall
29 appoint a secretary who need not be a member of the task force.

30 d. The task force may meet at the call of its chairperson and
31 hold ²~~at a minimum, three public~~² hearings, ²~~with at least one~~
32 ~~hearing to be held in each of the northern, southern, and central~~
33 ~~regions of the State, which hearings shall be conducted~~² remotely,
34 as appropriate, by telephone, computer, or other means of live audio
35 or video communication, at the times and in the places it deems
36 appropriate and necessary to fulfill its charge. The task force shall
37 be entitled to call to its assistance, and avail itself of the services of
38 the employees of, any State, county, or municipal department,
39 board, bureau, commission, or agency as it may require and as may
40 be available to it for its purposes.

41 e. ³~~['The Chief Diversity Officer of New Jersey shall consult~~
42 ~~with members of the Governor's cabinet on matters related to the~~
43 ~~functions of the task force, and shall invite representatives of any~~
44 ~~State department to attend hearings called by the chairperson of the~~
45 ~~task force, as appropriate.~~

46 f.³ The Department of Health shall provide staff services to
47 the task force.

- 1 2. The purpose of the task force shall be to:
- 2 a. conduct a thorough and comprehensive study on the ²ways
- 3 in which, and the² reasons ²【how】 why² the ²【COVID-19】
- 4 coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)² pandemic has
- 5 disproportionately affected the State’s minority and vulnerable
- 6 communities, and the short-term and long-term consequences of the
- 7 pandemic on these communities;
- 8 b. ⁵study and make recommendations to⁵ improve existing data
- 9 systems to ensure that the health information that is collected
- 10 relating to COVID-19 infections and deaths, ¹【include】 includes¹
- 11 specific race, ethnicity, and demographic identifiers to develop a
- 12 better statistical understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic has
- 13 affected the State’s minority and vulnerable communities;
- 14 c. evaluate the issues relating to the quality of, and access to,
- 15 ¹physical and mental¹ ²health² treatment and services provided to
- 16 various racial and ethnic populations in the State during the
- 17 COVID-19 pandemic; ²【and】²
- 18 d. ²solicit and receive testimony from members of the State’s
- 19 minority and vulnerable communities based on their experiences
- 20 during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- 21 e.² develop effective strategies to:
- 22 (1) address the racial, ethnic, and health disparities, and
- 23 historical and systematic inequalities pertaining to race and
- 24 ethnicity that have amplified the death rate in the State’s minority
- 25 and vulnerable communities during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- 26 ¹【and】¹ ²and²
- 27 (2) reduce and eliminate disparities among the various racial
- 28 and ethnic populations within the State’s minority and vulnerable
- 29 communities with respect to health status, access to high-quality
- 30 health care, and utilization of health care services ¹;
- 31 ²【e. hold a minimum of three public hearings, either in-person
- 32 or remotely, as appropriate, by telephone, computer, or other means
- 33 of live audio or video communication, with at least one hearing to
- 34 be held in the northern, southern, and central regions of the State, to
- 35 solicit and receive testimony from community members based on
- 36 their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic;】²
- 37 f. evaluate ²【communications, messages, and modes of】 the
- 38 communication, messaging, and² dissemination ²of information²
- 39 regarding testing, contact tracing, and other related public health
- 40 ²【matters】 approaches necessary² to achieve health care equity and
- 41 cultural competence ²in the provision of physical and mental health
- 42 treatment and services to the State’s minority and vulnerable
- 43 communities during the COVID-19 pandemic² ;
- 44 g. evaluate impediments that may interfere with an individual’s
- 45 ability to quarantine or isolate ²during the COVID-19 pandemic²;

1 h. analyze the distribution of resources, including personal
2 protective equipment and food, in the State's minority and
3 vulnerable communities;

4 i. examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the
5 physical and mental health of essential employees ²from the State's
6 minority and vulnerable communities² ;

7 j. examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on access to
8 child care services ²in the State's minority and vulnerable
9 communities² ;

10 k. investigate the prevalence of intimate partner violence ²in
11 the State's minority and vulnerable communities² during the
12 COVID-19 pandemic; and

13 l. identify best practices, opportunities for shared services, or
14 potential partnerships that would increase the communication of
15 health care information and materials in multiple languages for
16 ²[individuals] members of the State's minority and vulnerable
17 communities² , including persons with developmental disabilities
18 and senior citizens¹ .

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

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

31 (2) address the short- and long-term consequences of the
32 COVID-19 pandemic on the State's minority and vulnerable
33 communities; and

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

38 b. The task force shall expire 30 days after the issuance of its
39 report.

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41 4. This act shall take effect immediately.
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46 Establishes Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic
47 Task Force on Racial and Health Disparities.