

SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR
CITIZENS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 319

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: FEBRUARY 9, 2021

The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 319.

This bill establishes a process for the Legislature to request health impact assessments of pending legislation.

Specifically, the Planning Healthy Communities Initiative (PHCI) of the Rutgers University Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy and Rutgers Biomedical and Health Services, or a successor entity as may be jointly designated by legislative leadership, is to prepare a health impact assessment on a specific legislative bill when so requested by a majority of the legislative committee considering that bill.

A committee requesting a health impact assessment will be required to set a time limit of up to 30 days for completion of the health impact assessment. The legislative committee is to specify, but not limit, areas of impact to be covered by the statement, provided that any health impact assessment will include an analysis of any disparate effects that the bill will or may be expected to have on the health of minority populations in the State, including racial, ethnic, and cultural minorities.

A health impact assessment prepared under the bill is to be based on the best available empirical information and professional assumptions available to the PHCI within the time required for completing the assessment. In preparing an assessment, the PHCI will be authorized to access any necessary information as may be held by any State department, division, office, or agency or any other State, county, or local governmental entity, provided that nothing in the bill will require or authorize the disclosure of any personal identifying or confidential information in violation of State or federal privacy laws.

The PHCI may limit the number of health impact assessments it prepares to retain quality while operating within its available resources, and may decline a request for an assessment if complying with the request would not be feasible while operating within its available resources.

A health impact assessment prepared pursuant to the bill will constitute, upon delivery to the requesting committee, a public document that will be published on the Legislature's Internet website

together with other legislative materials concerning the bill that is the subject of the assessment.

The bill appropriates \$500,000 to the Department of State for allocation to the PHCI to carry out its duties under the bill. In addition, the PHCI may collaborate with State departments, divisions, offices, or agencies as may be appropriate to identify additional sources of State, federal, and private funding that may be appropriate.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2020-2021 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.