

[Third Reprint]

SENATE, No. 2410

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 7, 2020

Sponsored by:

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District 31 (Hudson)

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SYNOPSIS

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

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As amended by the Senate on January 28, 2021.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/17/2021)

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
 11 follows:

12 (1) the Chief Diversity Officer ²~~of New Jersey~~²; 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 and a representative of the Office of Emergency
 22 Management;

23 (2) two ³public³ members ³~~of~~ appointed by³ the Senate
 24 ³President³, one of whom shall be ³~~a member~~ appointed based
 25 on the recommendation³ of the New Jersey Black Legislative
 26 Caucus, and one of whom shall be ³~~a member~~ appointed based on
 27 the recommendation³ of the New Jersey Latino Caucus ³~~,~~
 28 appointed by the Senate President³;

29 (3) two ³public³ members ³appointed by the Speaker³ of the
 30 General Assembly, one of whom shall be ³~~a member~~ appointed
 31 based on the recommendation³ of the New Jersey Black Legislative
 32 Caucus, and one whom shall be ³~~a member~~ appointed based on
 33 the recommendation³ of the New Jersey Latino Caucus ³~~,~~
 34 appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly³; and

35 (4) ¹~~8~~ ten¹ public members appointed by the Governor, who
 36 shall include: a representative of the New Jersey Institute for Social
 37 Justice; a representative of a federally qualified health center; a
 38 physician licensed to practice in this State who specializes in
 39 providing care to patients in the State's minority and vulnerable
 40 communities; a nurse licensed to practice in this State who
 41 specializes in providing care to patients in the State's minority and
 42 vulnerable communities who may be a school nurse; a
 43 representative of a general hospital located in the State's minority

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:

¹Senate SHH committee amendments adopted October 8, 2020.

²Senate floor amendments adopted October 29, 2020.

³Senate floor amendments adopted January 28, 2021.

1 and vulnerable communities ¹with direct experience working with
2 minority and vulnerable communities; a representative of the
3 Maternal and Child Health Consortia¹; a representative of the New
4 Jersey Urban Mayor's Association; and ¹**['two'] three**¹
5 representatives of ¹**['two'] three**¹ different non-profit
6 ³**['organization'] organizations**³ that conduct research, education,
7 and training on, and develop policy initiatives to ¹**['', '']** address^{1, 1}
8 health equity in this State.

9 b. Vacancies in the membership of the task force shall be filled
10 in the same manner provided for the original appointments. The
11 public members of the task force shall serve without compensation
12 but may be reimbursed for traveling and other miscellaneous
13 expenses necessary to perform their duties within the limits of funds
14 made available to the task force for its purposes.

15 c. The task force shall organize as soon as practicable after the
16 appointment of its members and shall select a chairperson and vice-
17 chairperson from among its members. The chairperson shall
18 appoint a secretary who need not be a member of the task force.

19 d. The task force may meet at the call of its chairperson and
20 hold ¹at a minimum, three public¹ hearings, ¹with at least one
21 hearing to be held in each of the northern, southern, and central
22 regions of the State, which hearings shall be conducted¹ remotely,
23 as appropriate, by telephone, computer, or other means of live audio
24 or video communication, at the times and in the places it deems
25 appropriate and necessary to fulfill its charge. The task force shall
26 be entitled to call to its assistance, and avail itself of the services of
27 the employees of, any State, county, or municipal department,
28 board, bureau, commission, or agency as it may require and as may
29 be available to it for its purposes.

30 e. ²**['The Chief Diversity Officer of New Jersey shall consult**
31 **with members of the Governor's cabinet on matters related to the**
32 **functions of the task force, and shall invite representatives of any**
33 **State department to attend hearings called by the chairperson of the**
34 **task force, as appropriate.**

35 f. ²**['The Department of Health shall provide staff services to the**
36 **task force.**

37
38 2. The purpose of the task force shall be to:

39 a. conduct a thorough and comprehensive study on the ¹ways
40 in which, and the¹ reasons ¹**['how'] why,**¹ the ¹**['COVID-19']**
41 coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)¹ pandemic has
42 disproportionately affected the State's minority and vulnerable
43 communities, and the short-term and long-term consequences of the
44 pandemic on these communities;

45 b. improve existing data systems to ensure that the health
46 information that is collected relating to COVID-19 infections and
47 deaths, ¹**['include'] includes**¹ specific race, ethnicity, and

- 1 demographic identifiers to develop a better statistical understanding
2 of how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the State's minority
3 and vulnerable communities;
- 4 c. evaluate the issues relating to the quality of, and access to,
5 'physical and mental health' treatment and services provided to
6 various racial and ethnic populations in the State during the
7 COVID-19 pandemic; '[and]'
- 8 d. 'solicit and receive testimony from members of the State's
9 minority and vulnerable communities concerning their experiences
10 during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- 11 e.¹ develop effective strategies to:
- 12 (1) address the racial, ethnic, and health disparities, and
13 historical and systematic inequalities pertaining to race and
14 ethnicity that have amplified the death rate in the State's minority
15 and vulnerable communities during the COVID-19 pandemic; and
- 16 (2) reduce and eliminate disparities among the various racial
17 and ethnic populations within the State's minority and vulnerable
18 communities with respect to health status, access to high-quality
19 health care, and utilization of health care services ¹;
- 20 f. evaluate the communication, messaging, and dissemination
21 of information regarding testing, contact tracing, and other related
22 public health approaches necessary to achieve health care equity
23 and cultural competence in the provision of physical and mental
24 health treatment and services to the State's minority and vulnerable
25 communities during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- 26 g. evaluate impediments that may interfere with an individual's
27 ability to quarantine or isolate during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- 28 h. analyze the distribution of resources, including personal
29 protective equipment and food, in the State's minority and
30 vulnerable communities;
- 31 i. examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the
32 physical and mental health of essential employees from the State's
33 minority and vulnerable communities;
- 34 j. examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on access to
35 child care services in the State's minority and vulnerable
36 communities;
- 37 k. investigate the prevalence of intimate partner violence in the
38 State's minority and vulnerable communities during the COVID-19
39 pandemic; and
- 40 l. identify best practices, opportunities for shared services, or
41 potential partnerships that would increase the communication of
42 health care information and materials in multiple languages for
43 members of the State's minority and vulnerable communities,
44 including persons with developmental disabilities and senior
45 citizens¹.

- 1 3. a. No later than one year after the public health emergency
2 declared ¹【pursuant to P.L.2005, c.222 (C.26:13-1 et seq.)】¹ in
3 response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is lifted, the
4 task force shall report to the Governor and, pursuant to section 2 of
5 P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the Legislature, on the activities
6 of the task force and its findings and recommendations on strategies
7 to:
- 8 (1) address the racial, ethnic, and health disparities and
9 historical and systematic inequalities pertaining to race and
10 ethnicity that have amplified the death rate in the State's minority
11 and vulnerable communities during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- 12 (2) address the short- and long-term consequences of the
13 COVID-19 pandemic on the State's minority and vulnerable
14 communities; and
- 15 (3) reduce and eliminate disparities among the various racial
16 and ethnic populations within the State's minority and vulnerable
17 communities with respect to health status, access to high-quality
18 health care, and utilization of health care services.
- 19 b. The task force shall expire 30 days after the issuance of its
20 report.
- 21
- 22 4. This act shall take effect immediately.