

[First Reprint]

SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR  
**SENATE, Nos. 2751 and 2575**

---

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**219th LEGISLATURE**

---

ADOPTED AUGUST 20, 2020

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator LORETTA WEINBERG**

**District 37 (Bergen)**

**Senator JOSEPH F. VITALE**

**District 19 (Middlesex)**

**Senator JOSEPH PENNACCHIO**

**District 26 (Essex, Morris and Passaic)**

**Senator MICHAEL L. TESTA, JR.**

**District 1 (Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

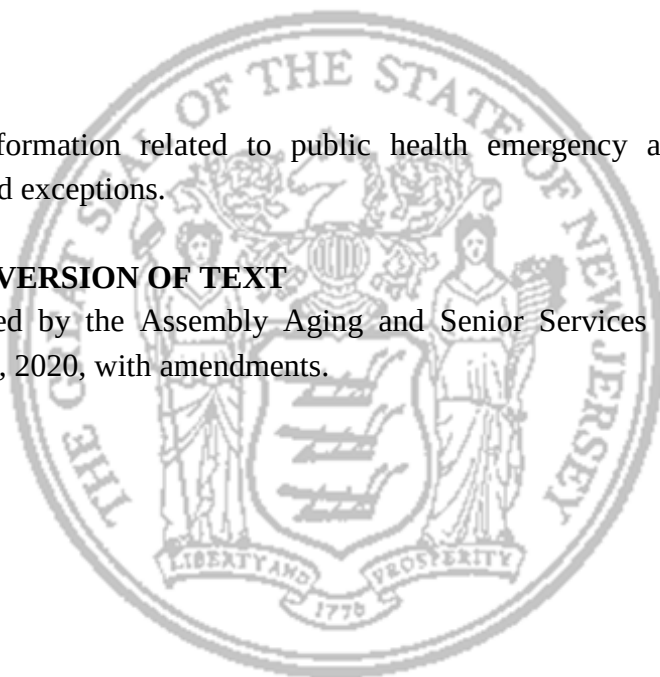
**Senators O'Scanlon**

**SYNOPSIS**

Makes information related to public health emergency accessible with certain limited exceptions.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As reported by the Assembly Aging and Senior Services Committee on December 10, 2020, with amendments.



1   **AN ACT** concerning open public records requests related to a public  
2       health emergency, and amending P.L.2005, c.222.

3

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

6

7       1. Section 2 of P.L.2005, c.222 (C.26:13-2) is amended to read  
8       as follows:

9       2. As used in this act:

10       "Biological agent" means any microorganism, virus, bacterium,  
11       rickettsiae, fungus, toxin, infectious substance, or biological  
12       product that may be naturally occurring or engineered as a result of  
13       biotechnology, or any naturally occurring or bioengineered  
14       component of any such microorganism, virus, bacterium,  
15       rickettsiae, fungus, infectious substance, or biological product,  
16       capable of causing death, disease, or other biological malfunction in  
17       a human, an animal, a plant, or another living organism.

18       "Bioterrorism" means the intentional use or threat of use of any  
19       biological agent, to cause death, disease, or other biological  
20       malfunction in a human, animal, plant, or other living organism, or  
21       degrade the quality and safety of the food, air, or water supply.

22       "Chemical weapon" means a toxic chemical and its precursors,  
23       except where intended for a lawful purpose as long as the type and  
24       quantity is consistent with such a purpose. Chemical weapon  
25       includes, but is not limited to: nerve agents, choking agents, blood  
26       agents, and incapacitating agents.

27       "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Health, or the  
28       commissioner's designee.

29       "Contagious disease" means an infectious disease that can be  
30       transmitted from person to person.

31       "Department" means the Department of Health.

32       "Health care facility" means any non-federal institution, building  
33       or agency, or portion thereof whether public or private for profit or  
34       nonprofit that is used, operated or designed to provide health  
35       services, medical or dental treatment or nursing, rehabilitative, or  
36       preventive care to any person. Health care facility includes, but is  
37       not limited to: an ambulatory surgical facility, home health agency,  
38       hospice, hospital, infirmary, intermediate care facility, dialysis  
39       center, long-term care facility, medical assistance facility, mental  
40       health center, paid and volunteer emergency medical services,  
41       outpatient facility, public health center, rehabilitation facility,  
42       residential treatment facility, skilled nursing facility, and adult day  
43       care center. Health care facility also includes, but is not limited to,  
44       the following related property when used for or in connection with  
45       the foregoing: a laboratory, research facility, pharmacy, laundry

**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:

<sup>1</sup>Assembly ASE committee amendments adopted December 10, 2020.

1 facility, health personnel training and lodging facility, patient, guest  
2 and health personnel food service facility, and the portion of an  
3 office or office building used by persons engaged in health care  
4 professions or services.

5 "Health care provider" means any person or entity who provides  
6 health care services including, but not limited to: a health care  
7 facility, bioanalytical laboratory director, perfusionist, physician,  
8 physician assistant, pharmacist, dentist, nurse, paramedic,  
9 respiratory care practitioner, medical or laboratory technician, and  
10 ambulance and emergency medical workers.

11 "Infectious disease" means a disease caused by a living organism  
12 or other pathogen, including a fungus, bacteria, parasite, protozoan,  
13 virus, or prion. An infectious disease may, or may not, be  
14 transmissible from person to person, animal to person, or insect to  
15 person.

16 "Isolation" means the physical separation and confinement of an  
17 individual or groups of individuals who are infected or reasonably  
18 believed to be infected, on the basis of signs, symptoms or  
19 laboratory analysis, with a contagious or possibly contagious  
20 disease from non-isolated individuals, to prevent or limit the  
21 transmission of the disease to non-isolated individuals.

22 "Local health agency" means a county, regional, municipal, or  
23 other governmental agency organized for the purpose of providing  
24 health services, administered by a full-time health officer and  
25 conducting a public health program pursuant to law.

26 "Local Information Network and Communications System  
27 Agency" or "LINCS agency" means the lead local public health  
28 agency in each county or identified city, as designated and  
29 determined by the commissioner pursuant to section 21 of this act,  
30 responsible for providing central planning, coordination, and  
31 delivery of specialized services within the designated county or  
32 city, in partnership with the other local health agencies within that  
33 jurisdiction, in order to prepare for and respond to acts of  
34 bioterrorism and other forms of terrorism or other public health  
35 emergencies or threats, and to discharge the activities as specified  
36 under this act.

37 "Microorganism" includes, but is not limited to, bacteria, viruses,  
38 fungi, rickettsiae, or protozoa.

39 "Nuclear or radiological device" means: any nuclear device  
40 which is an explosive device designed to cause a nuclear yield; an  
41 explosive radiological dispersal device used directly or indirectly to  
42 spread radioactive material; or a simple radiological dispersal  
43 device which is any act, container or any other device used to  
44 release radiological material for use as a weapon.

45 "Overlap agent or toxin" means: any microorganism or toxin that  
46 poses a risk to both human and animal health and includes:

47 Anthrax - *Bacillus anthracis*

- 1 Botulism - Clostridium botulinum toxin, Botulinum neurotoxins,
- 2 Botulinum neurotoxin producing species of Clostridium
- 3 Plague - Yersinia pestis
- 4 Tularemia - Francisella tularensis
- 5 Viral Hemorrhagic Fevers - Ebola, Marburg, Lassa, Machupo
- 6 Brucellosis- Brucellosis species
- 7 Glanders - Burkholderia mallei
- 8 Melioidosis - Burkholderia pseudomallei
- 9 Psittacosis - Chlamydophila psittaci
- 10 Coccidioidomycosis - Coccidioides immitis
- 11 Q Fever - Coxiella burnetii
- 12 Typhus Fever - Rickettsia prowazekii
- 13 Viral Encephalitis - VEE (Venezuelan equine encephalitis virus),
- 14 EEE (Eastern equine encephalitis), WEE (Western equine
- 15 encephalitis)
- 16 Toxins - Ricinus communis, Clostridium perfringens, Staph.
- 17 Aureus, Staphylococcal enterotoxins, T-2 toxin, Shigatoxin
- 18 Nipah - Nipah virus
- 19 Hantavirus - Hantavirus
- 20 West Nile Fever - West Nile virus
- 21 Hendra - Hendra virus
- 22 Rift Valley Fever - Rift Valley Fever virus
- 23 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza
- 24 "Personal identifying information" means information that may
- 25 be used, alone or in conjunction with any other information
- 26 contained within the same record, to identify a specific individual
- 27 and includes, but is not limited to, the name, address, email address,
- 28 social media address, telephone number, fax number, date of birth,
- 29 social security number, driver's license number, official State issued
- 30 identification number, employer or taxpayer number, place of
- 31 employment, telephone number of employment, employee
- 32 identification number, school address, school phone number,
- 33 student identification number, mother's maiden name, unique
- 34 biometric data, such as fingerprint, voice print, retina or iris image
- 35 or other unique physical representation, unique electronic
- 36 identification number, medical diagnoses, treatments or other
- 37 medical information concerning an identifiable person.
- 38 "Public health emergency" means an occurrence or imminent
- 39 threat of an occurrence that:
- 40 a. is caused or is reasonably believed to be caused by any of
- 41 the following: (1) bioterrorism or an accidental release of one or
- 42 more biological agents; (2) the appearance of a novel or previously
- 43 controlled or eradicated biological agent; (3) a natural disaster; (4) a
- 44 chemical attack or accidental release of toxic chemicals; or (5) a
- 45 nuclear attack or nuclear accident; and
- 46 b. poses a high probability of any of the following harms: (1) a
- 47 large number of deaths, illness, or injury in the affected population;
- 48 (2) a large number of serious or long-term impairments in the

1 affected population; or (3) exposure to a biological agent or  
2 chemical that poses a significant risk of substantial future harm to a  
3 large number of people in the affected population.

4 "Quarantine" means the physical separation and confinement of  
5 an individual or groups of individuals, who are or may have been  
6 exposed to a contagious or possibly contagious disease and who do  
7 not show signs or symptoms of a contagious disease, from non-  
8 quarantined individuals, to prevent or limit the transmission of the  
9 disease to non-quarantined individuals.

10 "Toxin" means the toxic material of plants, animals,  
11 microorganisms, viruses, fungi, or infectious substances, or a  
12 recombinant molecule, whatever its origin or method of production,  
13 including:

14 a. any poisonous substance or biological product that may be  
15 engineered as a result of biotechnology or produced by a living  
16 organism; or

17 b. any poisonous isomer or biological product, homolog, or  
18 derivative of such a substance.

19 (cf: P.L.2012, c.17, s.356)  
20

21 2. Section 26 of P.L.2005, c.222 (C.26:13-26) is amended to  
22 read as follows:

23 26. Any correspondence, records, and reports **【and medical**  
24 **information】** made, maintained, received or filed pursuant to this  
25 act shall **【not】** be **【considered a public or government record】**  
26 subject to disclosure under P.L.1963, c.73 (C. 47:1A-1 et seq.) and  
27 P.L.2001, c.404 (C.47:1A-5 et al.).

28 At no time shall personal identifying information, as defined in  
29 section 2 of P.L.2005, c.222 (C.26:13-2), be considered a public or  
30 government record under P.L.1963, c.73 (C.47:1A-1 et seq.) and  
31 P.L.2001, c.404 (C.47:1A-5 et al.).

32 The records custodian of a LINCS agency, as defined in section  
33 2 of P.L.2005, c.222 (C.26:13-2), may 'grant or' deny access to those  
34 portions of any correspondence, record, or report that relate to  
35 bioterrorism 'according to specific instructions or directives issued by  
36 the Department of Health or another appropriate State agency'.

37 (cf: P.L.2005, c.222, s.26)  
38

39 3. This act shall take effect immediately.