

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 10

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: OCTOBER 19, 2000

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 10.

This bill renames the New Jersey Office on Minority Health in the Department of Health and Senior Services and broadens the mission of the office by extending its existing duties and adding new ones.

Current law. The Office on Minority Health was created by law in 1992 to address the disparity in death, disease and injury rates between white and minority populations in New Jersey. The Office's statutory responsibilities include

- < making grants to community organizations to fund special research and demonstration projects for at-risk minority populations,
- < creating public-private partnerships in minority communities for health awareness and for access to public health services,
- < serving as a resource center for data on minority health,
- < developing culturally appropriate health education materials,
- < assisting schools with programs on nutrition and healthy lifestyles,
- < advocating measures to improve minority health,
- < encouraging the use, in health data collection, of specific race and ethnicity identifiers, and
- < developing a Statewide plan to increase the number of minority health care professionals.

Proposed changes. The bill would effect the following changes:

- (1) It would clarify that
 - < the population that the Office is to serve includes both racial and ethnic minorities, and
 - < the ultimate goal of the Office is to foster minority access to high-quality health care.
- (2) It would enhance the Office's powers and duties by
 - < allowing the Office to make grants to ongoing community-based programs, as well as special projects, and
 - < extending its informational function to include development of a clearinghouse that would collate and organize minority health data by county and disseminate the data on request.

- (3) It would confer new responsibilities on the Office, including
- < working with medical and dental schools to develop cultural and language competency courses that address disparities in health care access, use, quality and other variables,
 - < making recommendations on effective outreach to increase minority communities' participation in public health benefit programs,
 - < establishing an alliance with community-based agencies and various components of the health care sector to promote the objectives of the Office, and
 - < evaluating minority health programs in other states for their potential replication in New Jersey.

(4) Finally, it would redesignate the Office as the "Office on Minority and Multicultural Health."

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

Technical committee amendments revise the title of the act establishing the Office to reflect its redesignation under the bill.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill appropriates \$1.5 million from the General Fund to the Office on Minority and Multicultural Health to carry out the work of the Office and to implement its added responsibilities under the legislation. The bill also specifies that it is the intent of the Legislature that in succeeding fiscal years, \$1.5 million shall be appropriated to the Office, and that this amount shall be in addition to any amounts allocated to the Office from amounts appropriated in the FY2001 annual appropriations act.