SYNOPSIS

Requires hepatitis B to be considered a priority under “Eliminating Health Disparities Initiative.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.
AN ACT concerning hepatitis B and amending P.L.2004, c.137.

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

1. Section 1 of P.L.2004, c.137 (C.26:2-167.1) is amended to read as follows:

1. The Commissioner of Health shall establish the "Eliminating Health Disparities Initiative" in the Office on Minority and Multicultural Health. The commissioner shall require the office to develop and implement a comprehensive, coordinated plan to reduce health disparities between White and racial and ethnic minority populations in the State in the following priority areas: asthma; infant mortality; breast, cervical, prostate and colorectal cancer screening; kidney disease; HIV/AIDS; hepatitis B; hepatitis C; sexually transmitted diseases; adult and child immunizations; cardiovascular disease; diabetes; and accidental injuries and violence. As used in this act, "office" means the New Jersey Office on Minority and Multicultural Health.

(cf: P.L.2012, c.17, s.126)

2. This act shall take effect on the first day of the second month next following the date of enactment.

STATEMENT

This bill requires that the New Jersey Office on Minority and Multicultural Health (OMMH) in the Department of Health include hepatitis B as a priority condition under the “Eliminating Health Disparities Initiative.” The initiative requires that the OMMH develop and implement a comprehensive, coordinated plan to reduce health disparities between white and racial and ethnic minority populations in the State. The statute that required the establishment of the “Eliminating Health Disparities Initiative” lists the medical conditions to be considered priorities, and this bill amends the law to include hepatitis B on that list.

According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Asians from certain regions around the world who are living in the United States, including individuals from the Far East and Southeast Asia, make up less than five percent of the total United States population, yet account for more than half of those living with chronic hepatitis B in the United States. Consequently, the CDC considers chronic hepatitis B and associated liver cancer to be among the most serious health

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.
disparities. Many individuals in this high-risk population are not tested for hepatitis B and are unaware that they are infected, and many recent immigrants lack access to medical services that can help save their lives. New Jersey is home to more than 375,000 individuals at high risk of contracting hepatitis B, including individuals of Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese, and Japanese descent. Blood screenings of Korean American adults at one hospital in Bergen County in 2010 revealed that 42 percent of those screened were susceptible to the Hepatitis B virus.