

ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 5445

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 13, 2019

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 5445.

This bill requires the Attorney General, in consultation with the Commissioner of Health, to establish a program to detect fentanyl in the State's illegal drug supply and make information related to the presence of fentanyl available in a database that is accessible by law enforcement.

Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that can be up to 25 times more powerful than heroin. Fentanyl-related drug overdose deaths in New Jersey have increased dramatically. In 2017, there were 1,969 drug overdose deaths involving opioids in New Jersey, which is 50% higher than the national rate. The greatest increase in opioid deaths was seen in cases involving synthetic opioids, mainly fentanyl, with a rise from 38 deaths in 2012 to 1,376 deaths in 2017.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services finds that the bill will cause indeterminate annual expenditure increases to the Department of Law and Public Safety, the Department of Health, and local law enforcement. The OLS, however, lacks sufficient information regarding current law enforcement practices to quantify the bill's fiscal impacts.

The bill requires the Attorney General in the Department of Law and Public Safety and the Commissioner of the Department of Health to establish a database that is accessible by law enforcement agencies. Depending on the resource allocation policies of affected agencies, the added responsibilities may or may not augment State and local government administrative expenditures.

The bill requires all controlled dangerous substances seized by law enforcement officers in the State to be tested for the presence of fentanyl, and if confirmed, entered in a Statewide database.