

ASSEMBLY, No. 4292

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 22, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman SHAVONDA E. SUMTER

District 35 (Bergen and Passaic)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes New Jersey Racial Equity Rapid Response Team.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT concerning racial and ethnic minorities and the coronavirus
2 disease 2019.

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

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7 1. a. As used in this section:

8 "Health care professional" means a person licensed to practice a
9 health care profession pursuant to Title 45 of the Revised Statutes.

10 b. The Department of Health shall establish the New Jersey
11 Racial Equity Rapid Response Team. The purpose of the New
12 Jersey Racial Equity Rapid Response Team shall be to:

13 (1) document the impact of severe acute respiratory syndrome
14 coronavirus 2 and the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic on racial
15 and ethnic minorities;

16 (2) develop strategies based on data to slow the spread of severe
17 acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 and the coronavirus
18 disease 2019 in racial and ethnic minorities;

19 (3) develop strategies to improve the overall health of racial and
20 ethnic minorities; and

21 (4) identify three areas in the State with the most per capita
22 deaths due to the coronavirus disease 2019 that consist of a
23 municipality or a group of municipalities that are situated within
24 close proximity to one another.

25 c. (1) The Department of Health shall establish three advisory
26 units to be assigned to each of the areas identified in paragraph (4)
27 of subsection b. of this section.

28 d. Each advisory unit established pursuant to subsection c. of
29 this section shall consist of eight members as follows: the mayor of
30 a municipality to which the respective advisory unit is assigned, or
31 a designee, three residents of the municipality or municipalities to
32 which the respective advisory unit is assigned, two of which shall
33 be health care professionals, a municipal public health officer, a
34 county emergency management or public health officer, a
35 community advocate, and an educator.

36 e. The purpose of each advisory unit established pursuant to
37 subsection c. of this section shall be to:

38 (1) promote public awareness and education regarding the
39 coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic;

40 (2) promote coronavirus disease 2019 prevention, testing,
41 treatment, and other support services, as determined by the
42 Department of Health; and

43 (3) develop strategies to mitigate the harm caused by the
44 coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic in the area to which the
45 respective advisory unit is assigned and improve the economic
46 circumstance and health conditions of residents therein.

1 2. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire upon
2 the end of both the state of emergency and the public health
3 emergency declared in response to the coronavirus disease 2019
4 pandemic.

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6
7 STATEMENT

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9 This bill establishes the New Jersey Racial Equity Rapid
10 Response Team.

11 Under the bill, the Department of Health (DOH) is to establish
12 the New Jersey Racial Equity Rapid Response Team. The purpose
13 of the New Jersey Racial Equity Rapid Response Team is to: (1)
14 document the impact of severe acute respiratory syndrome
15 coronavirus 2 and the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic on racial
16 and ethnic minorities; (2) develop strategies based on data to slow
17 the spread of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 and
18 the coronavirus disease 2019 in racial and ethnic minorities; (3)
19 develop strategies to improve the overall health of racial and ethnic
20 minorities; and (4) identify three areas in the State with the most
21 per capita deaths due to the coronavirus disease 2019 that consist of
22 a municipality or a group of municipalities.

23 The bill provides that the DOH is to establish three advisory
24 units to be assigned to each of the areas identified as having the
25 most per capita deaths due to the coronavirus disease 2019. Each
26 advisory unit is to consist of eight members as follows: the mayor
27 of a municipality to which the respective advisory unit is assigned,
28 or a designee, three residents of the municipality or municipalities
29 to which the respective advisory unit is assigned, two of which shall
30 be health care professionals, a municipal public health officer, a
31 county emergency management or public health officer, a
32 community advocate, and an educator.

33 Under the bill, the purpose of each advisory unit is to: (1)
34 promote public awareness and education regarding the coronavirus
35 disease 2019 pandemic; (2) promote coronavirus disease 2019
36 prevention, testing, treatment, and other support services, as
37 determined by the DOH; and (3) develop strategies to mitigate the
38 harm caused by the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic in the area
39 to which the respective advisory unit is assigned and improve the
40 economic circumstance and health conditions of residents therein.

41 It is the sponsor's belief that the persistence of deep racial
42 disparities and divisions across society is evidence of institutional
43 racism—the routine, often invisible and unintentional, production
44 of inequitable social opportunities and outcomes. When racial
45 equity is not consciously addressed, racial inequality is often
46 unconsciously replicated. A racial equity approach will advance the
47 fight against the coronavirus disease 2019 and any conditions or
48 diseases resulting from the coronavirus disease 2019. Ending the

1 threat requires targeting strategies and resources towards those who
2 are most impacted by this pandemic, those least able to shelter in
3 place, and those facing the worst health inequities. Instead of
4 blaming and stigmatizing those who are most at risk of contracting
5 coronavirus disease 2019, the sponsor believes that their needs must
6 be centered, and the disease should be attacked with the urgency the
7 moment demands. Structural racism has always been a pre-existing
8 condition. All of society benefits from ending the threat of the
9 virus by attacking structural racism.