

SENATE, No. 347

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator BOB SMITH

District 17 (Middlesex and Somerset)

Senator JOSEPH F. VITALE

District 19 (Middlesex)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes “NJ One Health Task Force.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 **AN ACT** establishing the “New Jersey One Health Task Force,” and
2 supplementing Title 26 of the Revised Statutes.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

8 a. The term “One Health” reflects the interconnectedness of
9 human health, animal health, and the environment;

10 b. The strong connections and interdependency between
11 human, companion animal, livestock, and ecosystem health are
12 recognized in the One Health initiative framework, which facilitates
13 addressing complex, multi-disciplinary issues such as zoonotic
14 diseases, vector-borne diseases, and antimicrobial resistance;

15 c. Existing One Health initiatives at the federal level include
16 the One Health Office established by the Centers for Disease
17 Control and Prevention and the One Health Coordination center
18 established by the United States Department of Agriculture’s
19 Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and worldwide more
20 than 950 prominent scientists, physicians, and veterinarians have
21 endorsed the One Health initiative;

22 d. Awareness and collaboration among disciplines will help
23 protect the environment, the health of all species, save lives in
24 present and future generations, and increase quality of life, physical
25 and mental health, and productivity;

26 e. The term “One Health” recognizes that the health of people
27 is connected to the health of animals and the environment and is
28 described as a collaborative, multi-sector, and transdisciplinary
29 approach, working at the local, regional, national, and global levels,
30 with the goal of achieving optimal health outcomes recognizing the
31 interconnection between people, animals, plants, and their shared
32 environment;

33 f. One Health is not a new concept, but it has become
34 increasingly important in recent years as many factors have changed
35 interactions between people, animals, and the environment, leading
36 to the emergence or reemergence of many diseases;

37 g. A One Health approach is important because: six out of
38 every 10 infectious diseases in humans are spread from animals;
39 animals can sometimes serve as early warning signs of potential
40 illness in people; and public health preparedness depends on
41 agriculture in a variety of ways, including the cultivation of a wide-
42 range of vaccines in poultry eggs; and

43 h. It is, therefore, in the public interest for the State to establish
44 a permanent New Jersey One Health Task Force to promote the
45 health and wellness of New Jersey’s residents, animals, including
46 pets, livestock, and wildlife, and natural resources by encouraging
47 the collaborative efforts of experts and leveraging knowledge and
48 resources effectively.

1 2. a. There is established the “New Jersey One Health Task
2 Force” in the Department of Health. The purpose of the task force
3 shall be to develop a strategic plan to promote inter-disciplinary
4 communication and collaboration between physicians,
5 veterinarians, and other scientific professionals and State agencies,
6 with the goal of promoting the health and well-being of the State’s
7 residents, animals, and environment.

8 b. The goals and responsibilities of the task force shall include,
9 but are not limited to:

10 (1) development of a plan to promote inter-disciplinary
11 communication and collaboration between human, animal, and
12 environment health professionals;

13 (2) development of protocols for the response to, and recovery
14 from, zoonotic disease outbreaks in animals and humans;

15 (3) development of better diagnostic tests for zoonotic, vector-
16 borne, and environmental diseases;

17 (4) collaboration among disciplines for development of effective
18 xenosurveillance to identify genetic signatures of pathogens in
19 vertebrates;

20 (5) promotion of and education concerning judicious antibiotic
21 use by human, veterinary, and agriculture health professionals;

22 (6) investigation of antibiotic alternatives, such as bacteriophage
23 therapy;

24 (7) coordination and collaboration among appropriate entities to
25 develop new approaches to reduce hazards to human and animal
26 health and to address public health threats in a manner that prevents
27 duplication; and

28 (8) educational and outreach initiatives to promote the One
29 Health approach across State government agencies, the State’s
30 academic and research institutions, nongovernmental organizations,
31 and private entities.

32 c. In executing its responsibilities, the task force shall identify
33 and partner with academic institutions and nongovernmental
34 organizations in the State and consult with associations,
35 organizations, and individuals who are knowledgeable with the One
36 Health initiative.

37
38 3. a. The New Jersey One Health Task Force shall consist of
39 13 members as follows:

40 (1) the Secretary of Agriculture, or the secretary’s designee,
41 who shall serve ex officio;

42 (2) the Commissioner of Environmental Protection, or the
43 commissioner’s designee, who shall serve ex officio;

44 (3) the Commissioner of Health, or the commissioner’s
45 designee, who shall serve ex officio;

46 (4) 10 public members to be appointed by the Governor, with
47 the advice and consent of the Senate, as follows:

- 1 (a) one person representing the medical community, who is a
2 medical practitioner licensed to practice in the State;
- 3 (b) two people who are veterinarians licensed or approved to
4 practice in the State by the State Board of Veterinary Medical
5 Examiners, one of whom shall have knowledge, competence, or
6 experience with farm animals;
- 7 (c) one person with knowledge, competence, or experience in
8 medical research;
- 9 (d) one person with knowledge, competence, or experience in
10 zoonotic diseases;
- 11 (e) two people with expertise, knowledge, and experience in
12 epidemiology or biomedical sciences; and
- 13 (f) three people representing the State's academic community
14 with expertise, knowledge, and experience in public health,
15 ecology, natural resources, or environmental and biological
16 sciences.
- 17 b. Each public member of the task force shall serve for a term
18 of four years, except that, of the members first appointed, two
19 appointees shall serve for terms of four years, three appointees shall
20 serve for terms of three years, three appointees shall serve for terms
21 of two years, and two appointees shall serve for terms of one year.
22 Each member shall hold office for the term of appointment, and
23 until their successor is appointed and qualified.
- 24 Any vacancy in the task force membership shall be filled for the
25 unexpired term, in the same manner provided for the original
26 appointment. Members are eligible for reappointment to the task
27 force.
- 28 c. The task force shall organize as soon as practicable after the
29 appointment of a majority of its members, and shall select a
30 chairperson and a vice-chairperson from among its members, as
31 well as a secretary who need not be a member of the task force. A
32 majority of the membership of the task force shall constitute a
33 quorum for the transaction of task force business. The task force
34 may meet and hold hearings at the place or places as it shall
35 designate.
- 36 d. The members of the task force shall serve without
37 compensation, but may be reimbursed for travel and other necessary
38 expenses incurred in the performance of their duties, within the
39 limits of funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the task
40 force for its purposes.
- 41 e. The Department of Health shall provide professional and
42 clerical staff to the task force as may be necessary for the task
43 force's purposes. The task force shall also be entitled to call upon
44 the services of any State, county, or municipal department, board,
45 commission, or agency, as may be available to it for its purposes.
- 46 f. The task force may solicit and receive grants and other funds
47 that are made available for the task force's purposes by any
48 governmental, public, private, not-for-profit, or for-profit agency,

1 including funds that are made available under any federal or State
2 law, regulation, or program.

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4 4. Within 12 months after the task force's organizational
5 meeting, and at least biennially thereafter, the task force shall
6 submit a written report to the Governor, and, pursuant to section 2
7 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the Legislature summarizing
8 its work in the prior year, and may include any recommendations
9 for legislative or regulatory action to improve, promote, and protect
10 the health and well-being of the State's residents, animals, and
11 environment. Reports issued pursuant to this section shall be
12 posted on the Internet website of the Department of Agriculture, the
13 Department of Environmental Protection, and the Department of
14 Health.

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16 5. This act shall take effect immediately.

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19 STATEMENT

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21 This bill would establish a "New Jersey One Health Task Force"
22 in the Department of Health. The task force is charged with
23 developing a strategic plan to promote inter-disciplinary
24 communication and collaboration between physicians,
25 veterinarians, and other scientific professionals and State agencies,
26 with the goal of promoting the health and well-being of the State's
27 residents, animals, and environment.

28 The task force would consist of the following members: the
29 Secretary of Agriculture, the Commissioner of Environmental
30 Protection, and the Commissioner of Health, or their respective
31 designees; and 10 members appointed by the Governor, with the
32 advice and consent of the Senate, as follows: one person
33 representing the medical community, who is a medical practitioner
34 licensed to practice in the State; two people who are veterinarians
35 licensed or approved to practice in the State by the State Board of
36 Veterinary Medical Examiners, one of whom has knowledge,
37 competence, or experience with farm animals; one person with
38 knowledge, competence, or experience in medical research; one
39 person with knowledge, competence, or experience in zoonotic
40 diseases; two people with expertise, knowledge, and experience in
41 epidemiology or biomedical sciences; and three people representing
42 the State's academic community with expertise, knowledge, and
43 experience in public health, ecology, natural resources, or
44 environmental and biological sciences.

45 "One Health" recognizes that the health of people is connected to
46 the health of animals and the environment. One Health is not a new
47 concept, but it has become increasingly important in recent years, as
48 many factors have changed interactions between people, animals,

1 and the environment, leading to the emergence or reemergence of
2 many diseases. A One Health approach encourages collaborative
3 efforts of experts working across human, animal, and environmental
4 health to improve the health of people and animals, including pets,
5 livestock, and wildlife. The federal Centers for Disease Control and
6 Prevention established a One Health Office, recognizing that the
7 health of people is connected to the health of animals and the shared
8 environment.
9 This bill would ensure that this collaborative effort also occurs at
10 the State level.