

**ASSEMBLY, No. 4362**

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**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

**221st LEGISLATURE**

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INTRODUCED MAY 13, 2024

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman HERB CONAWAY, JR.**

**District 7 (Burlington)**

**Assemblywoman SHANIQUE SPEIGHT**

**District 29 (Essex and Hudson)**

**Assemblywoman VERLINA REYNOLDS-JACKSON**

**District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Provides for designation and establishment of Public Health Institute in New Jersey.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/3/2024)**

1 AN ACT concerning public health and supplementing Title 26 of the  
2 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. For over 25 years, New Jersey’s public health leaders have  
9 pursued interest in establishing a public health institute dedicated to  
10 promoting health, well-being, and quality of life for people  
11 throughout New Jersey.

12 b. Public health institutes are typically independent, nonprofit  
13 organizations that collaborate with public and private sector  
14 stakeholders, philanthropists, charitable organizations, and other  
15 agencies to foster public health solutions and systematically  
16 improve the way health agencies and organizations respond to  
17 public health threats and inequities.

18 c. Across the United States, there are currently over 40  
19 designated public health institutes working in partnership with State  
20 and local departments of health to enhance cross-sector initiatives  
21 and bridge gaps between health care and community services.

22 d. These existing public health institutes help states leverage  
23 and diversify the personnel, infrastructure and resources needed to  
24 accelerate solutions to various forms of public health threats  
25 including, but not limited to, communicable disease outbreaks,  
26 chronic and sexually transmitted diseases, substance use epidemics,  
27 issues related to food access and security, and systemic racial  
28 inequities affecting health care.

29 e. The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified the need for a  
30 public health institute in New Jersey that can work with public and  
31 private health care officials and providers to ensure a coordinated,  
32 resilient, equitable response to any public health emergency or state  
33 of emergency.

34 f. In 2022, the Nicholson Foundation and Robert Wood  
35 Johnson Foundation collaborated with a wide range of stakeholders  
36 from public health, healthcare, social services, and community  
37 organizations, and issued a report entitled, “Seizing the Moment:  
38 How a Public Health Institute Would Advance Health Equity in  
39 New Jersey.”

40 g. The report observed that New Jersey’s public health  
41 infrastructure and system has been strained for several decades due  
42 to a lack of funding and insufficient coordination across health and  
43 related sectors, and further noted that the impact of social and  
44 economic determinants of health have caused health inequities  
45 along racial, ethnic, income, and other fault lines

46 h. The report recommended the establishment of a public  
47 health institute in New Jersey that can support efforts to create a  
48 more stable, robust, public health infrastructure, and provide timely

1 and nimble administrative and operational support to New Jersey’s  
2 public health agencies.

3 i. In order to support and sustain a relationship between State  
4 government and a public health institute, it is necessary to establish  
5 a framework by which the New Jersey Department of Health may  
6 engage in a public-private partnership with an organization that can  
7 serve as the State’s “Public Health Institute.”

8 j. The Public Health Institute will actively promote  
9 collaborative and community-driven partnerships designed to  
10 improve public health systems and services throughout the State.

11 k. The primary role of the Public Health Institute will be to  
12 collaborate with State departments and agencies, as well as private  
13 sector health care, academic, philanthropic, business and faith  
14 communities, to coordinate and implement strategies in areas of  
15 policymaking, research and innovation, data collection, workforce  
16 development, and community-based interventions and services, to  
17 improve the overall state of public health in New Jersey, with a  
18 particular focus on eliminating racial disparities and inequities in  
19 public health.

20

21 2. As used in this act:

22 “Commissioner” means the Commissioner of Health.

23 “Department” means the Department of Health

24 “Public Health Institute” means an entity designated by the  
25 Department of Health as the State’s Public Health Institute pursuant  
26 to section 3 of P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature  
27 as this bill).

28

29 3. a. The Commissioner of Health shall designate one or  
30 more nonprofit entities to serve as the Public Health Institute  
31 pursuant to criteria established by the commissioner in accordance  
32 with this act.

33 b. The purpose and objective of the Public Health Institute  
34 shall be to:

35 (1) coordinate among national, State, and local agencies, as well  
36 as private organizations, for the purposes of promoting equitable  
37 public health services in New Jersey;

38 (2) provide timely and nimble administrative, operational and  
39 fiscal support to public and private health agencies, community-  
40 based organizations, and other strategic partners;

41 (3) develop and implement projects, programs, initiatives, or  
42 services designed to improve public health outcomes, address racial  
43 disparities in public health, and bridge gaps between public and  
44 private sector health care and community services;

45 (4) promote, support, and fund programs related to workforce  
46 development, education, applied research, policy development, and  
47 other initiatives that advance the purposes of the Public Health  
48 Institute;

1 (5) enter into contracts for the purchase of medical  
2 countermeasures, supplies or therapeutics, or other products or  
3 service agreements as may be necessary to aid the department in  
4 advancing or protecting the public health; and

5 (6) engage in charitable programs dedicated to the purposes and  
6 objectives of the Public Health Institute.

7 c. The commissioner shall establish criteria that an entity must  
8 satisfy to be designated as a Public Health Institute, which criteria  
9 shall include, at a minimum, the following:

10 (1) be a nonprofit organization located in New Jersey which is  
11 exempt from federal taxation pursuant to Section 501(c)(3) of the  
12 federal Internal Revenue Code (26 U.S.C. s.501(c)(3));

13 (2) be recognized by the National Network of Public Health  
14 Institutes or another membership or accreditation body for public  
15 health institutes;

16 (3) possess the capacity to integrate and coordinate public health  
17 functions on a local, county, and Statewide level;

18 (4) maintain a network of personnel with expertise in the areas  
19 of health care data collection and analysis, health care policy, health  
20 care information systems, and public health research; and

21 (5) any other criteria established by the commissioner.

22 d. An entity designated as the Public Health Institute pursuant  
23 to subsection a. of this section shall enter into an agreement with  
24 the department requiring the entity to:

25 (1) comply with all applicable laws and regulations necessary to  
26 qualify for and maintain its nonprofit status, including, but not  
27 limited to, the "New Jersey Nonprofit Corporation Act,"  
28 N.J.S.15A:1-1 et seq., and section 501(c) of the federal Internal  
29 Revenue Code (26 U.S.C. s.501(c));

30 (2) regularly consult with and give due consideration to the  
31 input and recommendations of the department in carrying out its  
32 duties under this act;

33 (3) develop and submit to the department an operational plan  
34 that includes a mission statement that supports, complements, and  
35 supplements the missions of the department;

36 (4) submit to the department an initial startup plan of certain  
37 issues, projects and action items the Public Health Institute shall  
38 pursue in the first three years of its designation;

39 (5) submit periodic planning documents and progress reports to  
40 the department at such intervals as may be determined by the  
41 commissioner;

42 (6) provide information, assistance, and services as may be  
43 required by the department in order to design, plan, implement or  
44 coordinate any projects, programs, initiatives, or services that  
45 advance the mutual purposes of the department and the Public  
46 Health Institute;

47 (7) report any data collected or maintained by the Public Health  
48 Institute to the department, including data related to public health

1 projects, programs, initiatives or services, and any other  
2 information that may advance the mutual purposes of the  
3 department and the Public Health Institute, provided that such data  
4 is submitted to the department in a manner consistent with any  
5 applicable State and federal law, rule, regulation, or agreement; and

6 (8) comply with any other requirements as may be determined  
7 by the commissioner.

8 e. The commissioner may, as a condition of a nonprofit entity  
9 maintaining its designation as the Public Health Institute, require  
10 such nonprofit entity to perform such additional tasks or satisfy  
11 additional requirements on a continuing basis.

12 f. The commissioner may, at any time, rescind a designation of  
13 Public Health Institute for any reason.

14

15 4. There is created in the Department of Health a special, non-  
16 lapsing fund to be known as the Public Health Institute Fund. There  
17 shall be deposited into the fund the amounts made available for the  
18 purposes of the fund and monetary donations or grants that may be  
19 received from any source for the purposes of the fund and any  
20 interest earned thereon. Monies deposited in the fund shall be  
21 dedicated for the support and funding of the establishment and  
22 maintenance of the Public Health Institute and any projects,  
23 programs, initiatives, or services of the Public Health Institute.

24

25 5. The Commissioner of Health may adopt rules and  
26 regulations, pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act,"  
27 P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), as may be necessary to  
28 implement the provisions of this act.

29

30 6. This act shall take effect immediately.

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#### STATEMENT

34

35 This bill provides for the designation and establishment of a  
36 Public Health Institute in New Jersey.

37 The bill requires the Commissioner of Health (commissioner) to  
38 designate one or more nonprofit entities to serve as the Public  
39 Health Institute pursuant to criteria established by the  
40 commissioner. The purpose and objective of the Public Health  
41 Institute will be to:

42 (1) coordinate among national, State, and local agencies, as well  
43 as private organizations, for the purposes of promoting equitable  
44 public health services in New Jersey;

45 (2) provide timely and nimble administrative, operational and  
46 fiscal support to public and private health agencies, community-  
47 based organizations, and other strategic partners;

1 (3) develop and implement projects, programs, initiatives, or  
2 services designed to improve public health outcomes, address racial  
3 disparities in public health, and bridge gaps between public and  
4 private sector health care and community services;

5 (4) promote, support, and fund programs related to workforce  
6 development, education, applied research, policy development, and  
7 other initiatives that advance the purposes of the Public Health  
8 Institute;

9 (5) enter into contracts for the purchase of medical  
10 countermeasures, supplies or therapeutics, or other products or  
11 service agreements as may be necessary to aid the department in  
12 advancing or protecting the public health; and

13 (6) engage in charitable programs dedicated to the purposes and  
14 objectives of the Public Health Institute.

15 Under the bill, the commissioner will establish criteria that an  
16 entity must satisfy to be designated as a Public Health Institute,  
17 which criteria shall include, at a minimum, the following:

18 (1) be a nonprofit organization located in New Jersey;

19 (2) be recognized by the National Network of Public Health  
20 Institutes or another membership or accreditation body for public  
21 health institutes;

22 (3) possess the capacity to integrate and coordinate public health  
23 functions on a local, county, and Statewide level;

24 (4) maintain a network of personnel with expertise in the areas  
25 of health care data collection and analysis, health care policy, health  
26 care information systems, and public health research; and

27 (5) any other criteria established by the commissioner.

28 An entity designated as the Public Health Institute pursuant to  
29 the bill will enter into an agreement with the department requiring  
30 the entity to:

31 (1) comply with all applicable laws and regulations necessary to  
32 qualify for and maintain its nonprofit status;

33 (2) regularly consult with and give due consideration to the  
34 input and recommendations of the department in carrying out its  
35 duties;

36 (3) develop and submit to the department an operational plan;

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38 issues, projects and action items the Public Health Institute will  
39 pursue in the first three years of its designation;

40 (5) submit periodic planning documents and progress reports to  
41 the department at such intervals as may be determined by the  
42 commissioner;

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44 required by the department in order to design, plan, implement or  
45 coordinate any projects, programs, initiatives, or services that  
46 advance the mutual purposes of the department and the Public  
47 Health Institute;

1 (7) report any data collected or maintained by the Public Health  
2 Institute to the department; and

3 (8) comply with any other requirements as may be determined  
4 by the commissioner.

5 The commissioner may, as a condition of a nonprofit entity  
6 maintaining its designation as the Public Health Institute, require  
7 such nonprofit entity to perform such additional tasks or satisfy  
8 additional requirements on a continuing basis. The commissioner  
9 may, at any time, rescind a designation of Public Health Institute  
10 for any reason.

11 The bill establishes in the Department of Health a special, non-  
12 lapsing fund to be known as the Public Health Institute Fund.  
13 Monies deposited in the fund will be dedicated for the support and  
14 funding of the establishment and maintenance of the Public Health  
15 Institute and any projects, programs, initiatives, or services of the  
16 Public Health Institute.