

ASSEMBLY, No. 4075

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

222nd LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 12, 2026

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman STERLEY S. STANLEY

District 18 (Middlesex)

Assemblywoman CAROL A. MURPHY

District 7 (Burlington)

Assemblywoman MARGIE DONLON, M.D.

District 11 (Monmouth)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman Speight

SYNOPSIS

Authorizes DOH to establish partnerships in international public health.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/19/2026)

1 AN ACT concerning public health collaboration and supplementing
2 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. Emerging infectious diseases and public health emergencies
9 pose significant risks to the health, safety, and economic stability of
10 the residents of this State.

11 b. On January 20, 2025, President Trump issued Executive
12 Order 14155, “Withdrawing the United States from the World
13 Health Organization,” and formally exited the organization on
14 January 22, 2026. The World Health Organization (WHO) was
15 founded in 1948 with the mission to act as a coordinating authority
16 on international public health issues and emergencies. The United
17 States has been actively engaged with WHO throughout its history.
18 Withdrawal from this organization leaves a void in world health
19 leadership, endangering the safety and wellbeing of billions of
20 people.

21 c. In 2025, the State established its first official Public Health
22 Institute within the Center for Health Equity and Wellbeing to
23 strengthen public health systems through innovation and
24 collaboration. The State also joined the multi-state Governors’
25 Public Health Alliance and the Northeast Public Health
26 Collaborative, which work to protect public health and facilitate
27 communication and coordination across state lines to address shared
28 public health challenges.

29 d. New Jersey’s strategic location, combined with investments
30 in transportation infrastructure, make the State a vital gateway for
31 commerce and travel, connecting nearly 60 million consumers
32 annually. Therefore, rapid detection, information-sharing, and
33 coordinated response are critical to preventing and mitigating
34 outbreaks of infectious disease.

35 e. The WHO’s Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network is
36 a well-established international technical collaboration that links
37 public health agencies, laboratories, academic institutions, and
38 response organizations to strengthen global outbreak preparedness
39 and response.

40 f. Participation in the Global Outbreak Alert and Response
41 Network does not bind the State or the United States to
42 international legal obligations.

43 g. Authorizing the New Jersey Department of Health to pursue
44 participation in the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network
45 and other initiatives in international public health will enhance the
46 State’s capacity for outbreak preparedness, situational awareness,
47 workforce development, and coordination with domestic and
48 international partners.

1 2. As used in this act:

2 “Department” means the Department of Health.

3 “Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network” means the
4 World Health Organization’s coordinated network of institutions,
5 including public health agencies, academic centers, laboratories,
6 and response organizations, that collaborate on detecting, verifying,
7 and responding to disease outbreaks and other public health
8 emergencies globally.

9 “Public health emergency” means an occurrence or imminent
10 threat of an illness or health condition that is believed to be caused
11 by bioterrorism, an epidemic or pandemic disease, or a novel or
12 highly infectious agent that poses a substantial risk of a significant
13 number of human fatalities or incidents of permanent or long-term
14 disability.

15

16 3. a. The Department of Health is authorized and directed to
17 take all reasonable and appropriate steps to seek participation in the
18 Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network.

19 b. To carry out the purposes of subsection a. of this section, the
20 department may:

21 (1) Communicate and coordinate with the World Health
22 Organization and the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network
23 operational support team;

24 (2) Submit expressions of interest, applications, or other
25 documentation required for participation;

26 (3) Designate one or more offices, divisions, or programs within
27 the department to serve as points of contact for the Global Outbreak
28 Alert and Response Network related activities;

29 (4) Participate in technical consultations, trainings, exercises,
30 and information-sharing activities consistent with the mission of the
31 Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network; and

32 (5) Collaborate with federal, State, local, academic, and
33 nonprofit partners, as appropriate, to support outbreak preparedness
34 and response activities.

35

36 4. a. Nothing in this act shall be construed to:

37 (1) establish membership of the State in the World Health
38 Organization;

39 (2) authorize the department to enter into any agreement or
40 undertaking that conflicts with federal law or the United States
41 Constitution;

42 (3) permit the disclosure of confidential or personally
43 identifiable health information except as otherwise authorized by
44 State or federal law; or

45 (4) require the expenditure of funds beyond those appropriated or
46 otherwise made available to the department.

1 5. a. The Commissioner of Health, within 18 months following
2 the effective date of this act, shall submit a report to the Governor
3 and, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the
4 Legislature.

5 b. The report shall include a description of actions taken by the
6 Department of Health to pursue participation in the Global
7 Outbreak Alert and Response Network, the status of the
8 department's participation in, or application to, the Global Outbreak
9 Alert and Response Network, a summary of any benefits,
10 challenges, or resource needs identified through such participation
11 or application, and any recommendations for further legislative or
12 administrative action, including but not limited to participation in
13 other international public health initiatives, as appropriate.

14 c. The department shall post the report required pursuant to this
15 section on its Internet website.

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17 6. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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22 This bill authorizes the Department of Health to take steps to
23 seek participation in the Global Outbreak Alert and Response
24 Network, a World Health Organization coordinated international
25 technical network that supports the detection of and response to
26 infectious disease outbreaks.

27 The bill permits the department to engage in communications,
28 coordination, and information sharing activities necessary to pursue
29 participation in the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network,
30 while expressly providing that nothing in the bill shall be construed
31 to confer membership upon the State in the World Health
32 Organization, authorize actions that conflict with federal law or the
33 United States Constitution, permit the disclosure of confidential
34 health information, or require the expenditure of funds beyond
35 those otherwise available.

36 The bill requires the Commissioner of Health to report to the
37 Governor and the Legislature on actions taken to pursue
38 participation in the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network
39 and the status of the department's participation or application.