SENATE, No. 4854

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

222nd LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 19, 2026

Sponsored by:
Senator VIN GOPAL
District 11 (Monmouth)

SYNOPSIS

Revises membership of Public Health Council and fully restores functions, powers, and duties of council.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of:)

AN ACT concerning the Public Health Council and amending and supplementing P.L.1947, c.177.

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

1. Section 4 of P.L.1947, c.177 (C.26:1A-4) is amended to read as follows:

4. There shall be in the department a Public Health Council which shall consist of 10 members, each of whom shall be chosen with due regard to his knowledge of and interest in public health and each of whom shall be a **[**citizen**]** resident of this State. **[**Two of such members shall be duly licensed physicians, one member shall be a dentist licensed to practice in the State of New Jersey, one member shall be a person knowledgeable by education or professional experience in health-related aspects of terrorism agents that may be used in acts of terrorism, and one member shall be a public health professional. Each member shall be appointed by the Governor, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, for a term of 7 years and until his successor is appointed and qualified; provided, however, that the first appointments hereunder shall be for terms which shall commence on July 1, 1947, and shall continue 1 for 1 year, 1 for 2 years, 1 for 3 years, 1 for 4 years, 1 for 5 years, 1 for 6 years, and 1 for 7 years; and provided further, that the term of the dentist member first appointed shall commence on July 1, 1954.**]**

a. The members of the council shall be appointed as follows:

(1) four members shall be appointed by the Governor, one of whom is a dentist licensed to practice in New Jersey, one of whom is a person knowledgeable by education or professional experience in health-related aspects of terrorism, one of whom is a dean of a school of public health of a regionally accredited institution of higher education in this State, or his designee, and is a current member of a local board of health;

(2) three members shall be appointed by the President of the Senate, one of whom is a physician who specializes in infectious disease, one of whom is a State-licensed public health officer, and one of whom is a representative of a philanthropic foundation in this State that funds research on public health issues; and

(3) three members shall be appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly, one of whom is a pediatrician licensed to practice in New Jersey, one of whom is a person with a demonstrated expertise in maternal and child health, and one of whom is a licensed health care professional with a demonstrated knowledge and interest in public health.

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

b. Each member appointed on or after the effective date of P.L. , c. (pending before the Legislature as this bill) shall serve for a term of four years and until his successor is appointed and qualified. A member of the council is eligible for reappointment.

The members of the Public Health Council serving on the effective date of P.L. , c. (pending before the Legislature as this bill) shall continue to serve until the expiration of their respective terms.

c. Any member of the Public Health Council may be removed from office by the Governor, for cause.

d. Any vacancy occurring in the membership of the council for any cause shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment but for the unexpired term only.

e. The members of the council shall serve without compensation, but shall be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

(cf: P.L.2004, c.158, s.1)

2. Section 11 of P.L.1947, c.177 (C.26:1A-11) is amended to read as follows:

11. In addition to its powers and duties otherwise provided in [this act, the] P.L.1947, c.177 (C.26:1A-1 et seq.),

a. The Public Health Council may:

[a.] (1) request from the commissioner such information, concerning the work of the department, as it may deem necessary;

[b.] (2) consider any matter relating to the preservation and improvement of public health, and may advise the commissioner thereon; and

[c.] (3) submit to the commissioner any recommendations which it may deem necessary for the proper conduct of the department [;

d. Study and investigate the public health activities of the State and report its findings thereon to the Governor and the Legislature].

b. The Public Health Council shall identify public and private grants and other sources of funding for public health purposes that may be available to the State and advise the commissioner of its findings.

c. The Public Health Council shall report annually to the Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), on its activities and include in the report such recommendations for legislative or administrative action as it deems appropriate.

(cf: P.L.1947, c. 177, s. 11)

3. (New section) Each public member appointment as specified in section 4 of P.L.1947, c.177 (C.26:1A-4) shall be made upon the expiration of the term of office of a member serving on the effective

date of P.L. , c. (pending before the Legislature as this bill) as follows:

a. The vacancies of the physician members on the council shall be filled in the order in which they appear in section 4 of P.L.1947, c.177 (C.26:1A-4);

b. The vacancies for the dentist member and person with experience in health-related aspects of terrorism agents shall be filled as the respective terms of those members serving on the effective date of P.L. , c. (pending before the Legislature as this bill) expire;

c. The licensed public health officer shall be appointed upon the expiration of the term of the public health professional; and

d. The person with demonstrated expertise in maternal and child health, the dean of a school of public health, the representative of a philanthropic foundation, the licensed health care professional with demonstrated knowledge and interest in public health, and the current member of a local board of health shall be appointed, in the order listed in this subsection, as the terms of public members serving on the effective date of P.L. , c. (pending before the Legislature as this bill) expire.

4. Notwithstanding the provisions of Executive Reorganization Plan 003-2005 to the contrary, the Public Health Council shall have the functions, powers, and duties prescribed in P.L.1947, c.177 (C.26:1A-1 et seq.).

5. This act shall take effect on the 45th day following enactment.

STATEMENT

This bill strengthens the Public Health Council by revising the membership of the council to ensure broader representation of public health interests; revising how the members are appointed; and fully restoring the council's powers and duties as set forth in P.L.1947, c.177 (C.26:1A-1 et seq.).

Under this bill the Public Health Council may:

(1) request from the commissioner such information, concerning the work of the department, as it may deem necessary;

(2) consider any matter relating to the preservation and improvement of public health, and may advise the commissioner thereon; and

(3) submit to the commissioner any recommendations which it may deem necessary for the proper conduct of the department.

In addition to its other duties prescribed by law, the Public Health Council is directed to identify public and private grants and other sources of funding for public health purposes that may be

available to the State and advise the Commissioner of Health of its findings.

Under the terms of the Executive Reorganization Plan 003-2005, the functions, powers, and duties of the Public Health Council, other than the council's advisory and consultative functions, were transferred to the Department of Health, effectively reducing the council to an advisory body, rather than a policymaking body. This bill restores the council's original functions, powers, and duties, and broadens the membership of the council to ensure a more effective Public Health Council in this State.

The Public Health Council is required to report annually to the Governor and the Legislature on its activities and include in the report such recommendations for legislative or administrative action as it deems appropriate.