
Health Care & Wellness Committee

HB 1262

Brief Description: Updating the governor's interagency coordinating council on health disparities.

Sponsors: Representatives Santos, Thai, Doglio, Berry, Ryu, Obras, Ormsby, Scott, Parshley, Timmons, Pollet, Macri, Simmons, Hunt and Hill; by request of Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Changes the name of the Governor's Interagency Coordinating Council on Health Disparities to the Governor's Council for Health Justice and Equity (Council).
- Increases the membership of the Council by adding one member from the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment, the LGBTQ Commission, the Women's Commission, and a federally recognized tribe, as well as four additional public members.
- Changes the responsibilities of the Council to working with governmental and nongovernmental partners to create a statewide vision and universal goals for health and well-being and develop related policy recommendations.

Hearing Date: 1/22/25

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

The Governor's Interagency Coordinating Council on Health Disparities (Disparities Council) is responsible for promoting and facilitating communication, coordination, and collaboration

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among state agencies, communities of color, and the public and private sector to address health disparities. The Disparities Council also is authorized to recommend initiatives to improve the availability of culturally appropriate health literature and interpretive services at health-related agencies. In addition, every four years the Council must update an action plan for eliminating health disparities with respect to specific diseases, conditions, and health indicators.

The Disparities Council's membership includes a representative from the Commission on African American Affairs, the Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs, the Commission on Hispanic Affairs, the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, the State Board of Health, the Department of Health, the Department of Social and Health Services, the Department of Commerce, the Health Care Authority, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Ecology, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Department of Children, Youth, and Families, and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. In addition, the Disparities Council has two members of the public. Members of the Disparities Council must reflect diversity in race, ethnicity, and gender.

Summary of Bill:

The name of the Governor's Interagency Coordinating Council on Health Disparities is changed to the Governor's Council for Health Justice and Equity (Council).

The membership of the Council is increased by adding one member from the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment, the LGBTQ Commission, the Women's Commission, and a federally recognized tribe. In addition, the public membership is increased from two members to six. At least two of the public members must be youth representatives who are age 26 or younger at the time of appointment. The public members must have direct lived experience with health inequities and represent communities excluded from the power, opportunities, access, and resources needed to attain health and well-being.

The Governor shall appoint co-chairs, at least one of which must be a public member or a member from any of the following: the Commission on African American Affairs; the Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs; the Commission on Hispanic Affairs; the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs; the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment; the LGBTQ Commission; the Women's Commission; or a federally recognized tribe. Council members who do not represent a state agency are appointed by the Governor with guidance from the Office of Equity. Members of the Council must be committed to the principles of health justice and equity and well-informed on those principles. In addition to race, ethnicity, and gender, to the extent practicable, members must be diverse in age, disability status, sexual orientation, gender identity, military or military family status, urban and rural areas, and regions of the state.

The Council's responsibilities related to promoting coordination among state agencies, culturally appropriate health literature, and the action plan for eliminating health disparities are replaced with new authorities. The Council's new responsibilities require it to create a statewide vision

and universal goals for health and well-being and to develop related policy recommendations.

The Council must develop the vision, goals, and policy recommendations through engagement with communities. The vision, goals, and policy recommendations must:

- provide a framework for communities, state agencies, the Governor, and the Legislature to advance health justice and equity;
- recognize racism as a public health crisis;
- recognize how climate change affects all persons and exacerbates inequities;
- incorporate the diverse communities of the state and recognize the forms of oppression that are barriers to attaining optimal health and full potential;
- guide state agencies to fulfill environmental justice requirements and responsibilities related to the Office of Equity; and
- work toward resolving negative structural and social determinants of health and promoting the positive determinants.

The Council must submit an initial report with the vision and goals for health and well-being to the Governor and the relevant committees of the Legislature by October 31, 2027. Between October 31, 2029, and October 31, 2039, the Council must submit updates of the report every two years. The updates must include policy recommendations, the status of policy adoption and implementation, and any revisions to the vision and goals.

The Council must also conduct hearings and research into how the actions of state government improve or contribute to health inequities and recommend initiatives to improve the availability of culturally and linguistically appropriate information and services. The Council must also collaborate with state entities to take actions that are coordinated and rooted in antiracism, access, belonging, and justice.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 21, 2025.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.