

Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office

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FISCAL NOTE

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H.210 - An act related to addressing disparities and promoting equity in the health care system

As recommended by the House Committee on Health Care

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2022/H.210>

The purpose of the bill is to eliminate disparities in health status based on race, ethnicity, disability, and LGBTQ status by (1) establishing better and more consistent collection and access to data; (2) enhancing the full range of available and accessible culturally appropriate health care and public services across Vermont; (3) ensuring the early and equitable inclusion of Vermonters who experience health inequalities because of race, ethnicity, disability, and LGBTQ status in efforts to eliminate such inequities; and (4) addressing the social determinants of health, particularly social, economic, and environmental factors that influence health. The following are the estimated fiscal impacts related to the bill.

Health Equity Advisory Commission

Sec. 3 of the bill establishes a Health Equity Advisory Commission which would meet at least bi-monthly. The advisory commission would have the administrative, legal, and technical assistance of the Agency of Administration (AOA) at the request of the Executive Director of Racial Equity, who would also temporarily oversee and chair the commission. The advisory commission would have 27 members, of which at least 18 would be public members who are residents of Vermont and eligible for per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as deemed appropriate by the Advisory Commission within the appropriation provided. The actual cost for per diems and expenses will depend on how many meetings and how many public members attend each meeting and could range between \$12,000.00 and \$20,000.00. Expenses for per diems and expenses are included as part of the appropriation in Sec. 6.

One of the many tasks of the advisory commission would be to provide strategic guidance on the development of an Office of Health Equity, including recommendations on the structure, responsibilities, and jurisdiction of such an office.

Data Responsive to Health Equity Inquiries

Sec. 3 of the bill also includes health equity requirements related to the current collection of health-related data across state government. H.315 – An Act Relating to Covid-19 Relief – as passed by the House, includes an appropriation of \$200,000.00 for the implementation of these requirements.

- \$165,000.00 gross (\$66,000.00 general fund / \$99,000.00 special funds) to the Green Mountain Care Board

- \$134,000.00 to the Vermont Department of Health

Since funds pertaining to this provision were included in H.315 as passed by the House, no appropriation for this section is included in this bill.

FY 2022 Appropriation

Sec. 6 of the bill appropriates \$180,000.00 to the Agency of Administration from the general Fund for use by the Executive Director of Racial Equity in carrying out the provisions of this act. This includes administrative and programmatic needs, per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses, and contracting out for services as needed.

- ***FY 2022 appropriation = \$180,000.00***
 - *The bill includes legislative intent language that similar appropriations be made in future fiscal years until an Office of Health Equity is established.*

Other Considerations: The bill envisions the creation of an Office of Health Equity, which once created, would require staff and resources in future budgets.