

Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office

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FISCAL NOTE

Date: Updated May 5, 2021
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H.210 - An act relating to addressing disparities and promoting equity in the health care system

Senate Proposal of Amendment

<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. 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. The advisory commission would have at least 29 members, of which at least 19 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 available appropriation. 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 will be included in the overall appropriation.

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 the office. The advisory commission would also advise VDH and the General Assembly on any funding decisions relating to eliminating health disparities, and promoting health equity, including the distribution of federal monies related to COVID-19. Additionally, to the extent funds are made available, the advisory commission would distribute grants.

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. Act 9 (H.315) of 2021 – An Act Relating to Covid-19 Relief – included the following appropriations for the implementation of these requirements.

- \$66,000 in general funds to the Green Mountain Care Board
 - This would be matched by \$99,000.00 in special funds for a gross of \$165,000.00
- \$134,000.00 to the Vermont Department of Health

Since funds pertaining to this provision were included in Act 9, no further appropriation for this section is required.

FY 2023 Budget Recommendation

Sec. 6 would require the Advisory Commission to include budget recommendations for continuations of its work in fiscal year 2023 (if necessary), and for funding of the Office of Health Equity as part of its annual report.

Fiscal Summary

There are no appropriations in this bill

- *H.439 (the FY 2022 Big Bill) as passed by the House and amended by the Senate included an appropriation of \$180,000.00 to the Agency of Administration Office of Racial Equity for activities related to health disparities and health equity with the intent of carrying out provisions of this bill. This includes administrative and programmatic needs, per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses, and contracting out for services as needed.*
- *Act 9 (H.315) of 2021 – An Act Relating to Covid-19 Relief – included money related to the “data responsive to health inquiries” section of the bill so no further appropriation is needed.*