

2020 Second Extraordinary Session

SENATE BILL NO. 64

BY SENATOR BARROW

PUBLIC HEALTH. Creates the Louisiana COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force (gov sig) (Item #40)

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AN ACT

To enact R.S. 36:4(W) and R.S. 40:1263, relative to equity in health care services for COVID-19; to provide for the COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force; to provide for membership; to provide for the duties of the task force; to provide for subcommittees; to provide for the use of donations and grants; to provide for recommendations to the legislature for updates; to provide for a termination date; to provide for an effective date; and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

Section 1. R.S. 36:4(W) is hereby enacted to read as follows:

§4. Structure of executive branch of state government

* * *

W. The COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force, as provided for in R.S. 40:1263, shall be placed within the office of the governor and shall exercise its powers, duties, and functions as provided by law.

* * *

Section 2. R.S. 40:1263 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

§1263. COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force

1 **A.(1) The COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force is hereby created within**
2 **the office of the governor to address health equity in Louisiana, serve as a**
3 **foundation and resource for addressing health care disparities in vulnerable**
4 **populations, and contribute to the progression and improvement of Louisiana's**
5 **health care rankings.**

6 **(2)(a) Task force members will conduct assessments of the status of the**
7 **state's response as it affects vulnerable populations and issue a series of**
8 **actionable reports with recommendations to assure that the state emerges from**
9 **the COVID-19 pandemic in a stronger position with a focus on health equity**
10 **and improved health outcomes for all Louisiana residents.**

11 **(b) Members of the task force shall be selected by the governor and shall**
12 **comprise representatives assigned from relevant and interested state agencies**
13 **and other relevant and interested parties, including but not limited to all of the**
14 **following:**

15 **(i) Southern University Nelson Mandela School of Public Policy.**
16 **(ii) Xavier University Department of Public Health Sciences.**
17 **(iii) The Health Science Centers at Louisiana and Tulane.**
18 **(iv) The Louisiana Department of Health, office of public health.**
19 **(v) The Louisiana Department of Health, bureau of minority health**
20 **access.**

21 **(vi) Pennington Biomedical Research Center.**
22 **(vii) The schools of nursing at all Louisiana universities.**

23 **B. The duties of the task force shall be all of the following:**

24 **(1) Provide recommendations relative to health inequities which are**
25 **affecting communities that are most impacted by COVID-19.**

26 **(2) Provide reliable and data driven information on COVID-19 safety**
27 **and prevention.**

28 **(3) Ensure COVID-19 testing availability and ease of access for all**
29 **communities.**

1 **(4) Provide the medical community with best practices and protocols for**
2 **treating communities with underlying medical conditions and health disparities.**

3 **(5) Examine opportunities which provide greater access to high quality**
4 **medical care and improve health outcomes.**

5 **C.(1) The task force may establish subcommittees to assist in carrying**
6 **out its duties, including but not limited to all of the following:**

7 **(a) A public and regulatory policy subcommittee to provide input**
8 **relative to policies and laws that impact health disparities.**

9 **(b) A nursing subcommittee to provide input from the group comprising**
10 **the largest percentage of health professionals in the health care workforce.**

11 **(c) A medical community subcommittee to provide significant**
12 **contributions in the medical field relative to COVID-19.**

13 **(d) A health disparities and research subcommittee to provide research**
14 **and data regarding the disparities aligned with COVID-19.**

15 **(e) A data and analytics subcommittee to provide expertise in the**
16 **analysis of relevant data which will add to the work of the committee.**

17 **(f) A community outreach and engagement subcommittee to provide**
18 **input on community outreach and extension activities, especially lower**
19 **socioeconomic parishes with high incidence rates.**

20 **(2) Subject to grant or donation funding as provided for in Subsection**
21 **E of this Section, the task force may establish a statewide Dashboard on Health**
22 **Equity to measure progress.**

23 **D.(1) Task force members shall serve without compensation.**

24 **(2)(a) The source of funding for the task force shall be limited to any**
25 **public or private donations, gifts, or grants from individuals, corporations,**
26 **nonprofit organizations, or other entities and any other monies which may be**
27 **provided by law.**

28 **(b) Funding provided to the task force shall be used only to comply with**
29 **the provisions of this Section, including but not limited to any of the following:**

- 1 **(i) Science-based research.**
- 2 **(ii) Comprehensive evidenced-based analysis of the determinants of**
- 3 **health equity that influence racial health disparities.**
- 4 **(iii) Evidenced-based analysis of interventions that positively impact**
- 5 **health equity and address disparities.**
- 6 **(iv) Examination of the population dynamics that are indicative of**
- 7 **health equity and disparities to formulate a statewide dashboard.**
- 8 **(v) Promotion of health awareness educational media campaigns.**
- 9 **(vi) Assessments of the status of the state's response as it affects**
- 10 **vulnerable populations and the impact of COVID-19.**

11 **E. The task force shall continually review the provisions of this Section**

12 **for the purposes of determining whether revisions and updates are needed and**

13 **make recommendations to the legislature for any necessary legislation. The task**

14 **force shall submit a report to the legislature triennially or more frequently as**

15 **considered necessary by the task force.**

16 **F. The provisions of this Section shall terminate on December 31, 2030.**

17 Section 3. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not

18 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature

19 by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If

20 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become

21 effective on the day following such approval.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Brandi Cannon.

DIGEST

SB 64 Original 2020 Second Extraordinary Session Barrow

Proposed law provides for the COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force in the office of the governor to address health equity in Louisiana, serve as a foundation and resource for addressing health care disparities in vulnerable populations, and contribute to the progression and improvement of Louisiana's health care rankings.

Proposed law provides that members of the task force shall be selected by the governor. Further provides that members shall be representatives assigned from relevant and interested state agencies and other parties.

Proposed law provides for the duties of the task force. Further provides that the task force may establish subcommittees to assist in carrying out its duties.

Proposed law provides that task force members shall serve without compensation and limits the source of funding for the task force to any public or private donations, gifts, or grants from individuals, corporations, nonprofit organizations, or other entities and any other monies which may be provided by law. Further provides that task force funding shall be used only to comply with the provisions of proposed law.

Proposed law provides that the task force shall continually review the provisions of proposed law for the purposes of determining whether revisions and updates are needed and make recommendations to the legislature for any necessary legislation. Further provides that the task force shall submit a report to the legislature triennially or more frequently as considered necessary by the task force.

Proposed law shall terminate on December 31, 2030.

Effective upon signature of the governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Adds R.S. 36:4(W) and R.S. 40:1263)