

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2023

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HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

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HOUSE BILL DRH30041-MGa-55

Short Title: Local Communicable Disease Programs/Funds. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative White.

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN
3 SERVICES, DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH, TO CONTINUE THE STATE'S
4 PROGRESS IN COMMUNICABLE DISEASE RESPONSE.

5 Whereas, there are over 80 reportable communicable diseases in North Carolina that
6 local health departments (LHDs) are responsible for investigating and managing; and

7 Whereas, the United States is approaching a record number of Avian Influenza (Bird
8 Flu) outbreaks in wild birds and poultry, which is a potential threat to the public health; and

9 Whereas, LHDs must respond to the rise and spread of newly emerging and
10 re-emerging communicable diseases; and

11 Whereas, in 2018, the North Carolina Legislature appropriated six million seven
12 hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$6,750,000) in recurring funds for communicable disease
13 response in the 2018 Appropriations Act, which was ratified by the General Assembly, but was
14 subsequently vetoed by the Governor; and

15 Whereas, without this funding for communicable disease response, LHDs were forced
16 to scramble to identify additional staff and resources to respond to the COVID-19 public health
17 emergency; and

18 Whereas, in the 2021 Appropriations Act, the General Assembly made a down
19 payment of thirty-six million dollars (\$36,000,000) in nonrecurring federal funds for the
20 2021-2023 fiscal biennium to begin modernizing the State's local communicable disease response
21 system by expanding communicable disease surveillance, detection, control, and prevention
22 activities to address the COVID-19 public health emergency and other communicable disease
23 challenges; and

24 Whereas, these funds have been foundational to the efforts of LHDs to respond to the
25 COVID-19 public health emergency and to address other communicable disease challenges; and

26 Whereas, LHDs in North Carolina remain understaffed, with an estimated shortage
27 of 1,700 public health staff at the local level, including communicable disease nurses and other
28 professionals, who are vital to the State's communicable disease response; Now, therefore,
29 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

30 **SECTION 1.(a)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of
31 Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, the sum of twenty-five million dollars
32 (\$25,000,000) in recurring funds for the 2023-2024 fiscal year and the sum of twenty-five million
33 dollars (\$25,000,000) in recurring funds for the 2024-2025 fiscal year to be allocated to local
34 health departments, as provided in subsection (b) of this section, to do all of the following:

- 35 (1) To continue to address the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 public health
36 emergency and other communicable disease challenges.



- 1 (2) To better prepare the State for emerging and re-emerging public health threats.
- 2 (3) To retain and hire additional communicable disease staff, including public
- 3 health nurses and other public health professionals, who are vital not only to
- 4 maintaining North Carolina's communicable disease response but also to
- 5 ensuring that the essential public health services described in G.S. 130A-1.1
- 6 are available and accessible to the population served by the local health
- 7 department.

8 **SECTION 1.(b)** In the distribution of these funds to local health departments, for
9 each year of the 2023-2025 fiscal biennium, the Department of Health and Human Services,
10 Division of Public Health, shall do all of the following:

- 11 (1) Divide twelve million five hundred thousand dollars (\$12,500,000) equally
- 12 among the local health departments based on the number of counties served
- 13 by each local health department.
- 14 (2) Distribute the remaining twelve million five hundred thousand dollars
- 15 (\$12,500,000) to local health departments based upon the percentage of the
- 16 State population served by each of the local health departments.
- 17 (3) Begin distributing the funds allocated under this section no later than (i) 60
- 18 days after the date the Office of State Budget and Management and the Office
- 19 of the State Controller establish the certified budget for the Department of
- 20 Health and Human Services for the 2023-2024 fiscal year and (ii) 60 days after
- 21 the date the Office of State Budget and Management and the Office of the
- 22 State Controller establish the certified budget for the Department of Health
- 23 and Human Services for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

24 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2023.