

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2021

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HOUSE BILL 61
Committee Substitute Favorable 3/30/21

Short Title: Local Communicable Disease Programs/Funds.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

February 9, 2021

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN
SERVICES, DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH, FOR DISTRIBUTION TO LOCAL
HEALTH DEPARTMENTS FOR EXPANSION OF LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE
ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE SURVEILLANCE, DETECTION, CONTROL,
AND PREVENTION OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES.

Whereas, in the last ten years, cases of communicable diseases have increased over
two hundred percent (200%); and

Whereas, State funding to support communicable disease efforts has remained
stagnant, thereby creating pressures on local governments to meet these demands; and

Whereas, in the 2017-2018 fiscal year, general communicable disease control cost
twenty million six hundred thousand dollars (\$20,600,000), and State funding provided less than
five percent (5%) of that cost, or approximately eight hundred sixty-seven thousand dollars
(\$867,000), leaving the remaining nineteen million eight hundred thousand dollars (\$19,800,000)
to be borne by local governments; and

Whereas, State law requires local health departments to implement control measures
to prevent the spread of all reportable communicable diseases or communicable conditions and
any other communicable disease or communicable condition that represents a significant threat
to the public health; and

Whereas, local health departments provide, at no cost to the patient, the examination
and treatment for tuberculosis disease and infection and for sexually transmitted diseases
designated by the Commission for Public Health; and

Whereas, local health departments must have the infrastructure and capacity to
perform communicable disease control and surveillance activities in order to prevent the spread
of disease and protect the public health; and

Whereas, in addition to COVID-19, North Carolina's local health departments are
required to report and respond to over eighty other communicable diseases each year; and

Whereas, in 2019, North Carolina ranked 46th in per person state public health
funding; and

Whereas, North Carolina's public health system needs new, recurring funding to
address the challenges posed by COVID-19, including vaccine distribution, while also protecting
North Carolina's public health and its economy in the long term; Now, therefore,
The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1.1. It is the intent of the General Assembly to protect the public health
by providing additional State funds to address increased demands associated with communicable
and emerging infectious diseases. To that end, there is appropriated from the General Fund to the



Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, the sum of thirty-six million dollars (\$36,000,000) in recurring funds for the 2021-2022 fiscal year and the sum of thirty-six million dollars (\$36,000,000) in recurring funds for the 2022-2023 fiscal year to be distributed to local health departments to expand local infrastructure for activities associated with the surveillance, detection, control, and prevention of communicable diseases. In the distribution of these funds to local health departments under this section, for each year of the 2021-2023 fiscal biennium, the Division of Public Health shall divide eighteen million dollars (\$18,000,000) equally among the local health departments based on the number of counties served by each local health department. The Division of Public Health shall distribute the remaining eighteen million dollars (\$18,000,000) to local health departments based upon the percentage of the State population served by each of the local health departments. The Division shall begin distributing the total thirty-six million dollars (\$36,000,000) to the local health departments not later than September 1 of each fiscal year and shall receive plans on the use of funds from the local health departments. Local health departments shall use all funds allocated under this section to supplement and not supplant existing funds for the surveillance, detection, control, and prevention of communicable diseases.

SECTION 1.2. On or before November 1, 2021, and February 1, 2022, and on or before November 1, 2022, and February 1, 2023, the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, shall report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services on the funding appropriated by this section. Each report shall include the elements below:

- (1) The amount of funding pursuant to this section that each county received for surveillance, detection, control, and prevention of communicable diseases.
- (2) An explanation if the sum of the funding received by all counties under this section is not equivalent to the total funds appropriated each year.
- (3) Information on how the local health departments plan to use and subsequently did use these funds to address surveillance, detection, control, and prevention of communicable diseases.
- (4) Consistent with the supplement and not supplant intent of this section, the report shall delineate funds other than those distributed in accordance with this section that were received by each county to address surveillance, detection, control, and prevention of communicable diseases.
- (5) Additional information as may be requested by the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services.

SECTION 2. This act becomes effective July 1, 2021.