

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2021

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HOUSE BILL 61

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

Sponsors: Representatives White, Potts, and Lambeth (Primary Sponsors).

For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Appropriations, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

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 LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT
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. 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



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1 and emerging infectious diseases. To that end, there is appropriated from the General Fund to the
2 Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, the sum of thirty-six
3 million dollars (\$36,000,000) in recurring funds for the 2021-2022 fiscal year and the sum of
4 thirty-six million dollars (\$36,000,000) in recurring funds for the 2022-2023 fiscal year to be
5 allocated to local health departments to expand local infrastructure for activities associated with
6 the surveillance, detection, control, and prevention of communicable diseases. In allocating these
7 funds to local health departments under this section, for each year of the 2021-2023 fiscal
8 biennium, the Division of Public Health shall divide eighteen million dollars (\$18,000,000)
9 equally among the local health departments. The Division of Public Health shall allocate the
10 remaining eighteen million dollars (\$18,000,000) to local health departments based upon the
11 percentage of the State population served by each of the local health departments. Local health
12 departments shall use all funds allocated under this section to supplement and not supplant
13 existing funds for the surveillance, detection, control, and prevention of communicable diseases.

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