



General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 705

January Session, 2021



AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN OFFICE OF PANDEMIC AND PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2021*) (a) There is established an
2 Office of Pandemic and Public Health Preparedness, which shall be
3 within the Department of Public Health for administrative purposes
4 only. The department head of said office shall be the executive director
5 of the Office of Pandemic and Public Health Preparedness, who shall be
6 appointed by the Governor in accordance with the provisions of sections
7 4-5 to 4-8, inclusive, of the general statutes, as amended by this act, with
8 the powers and duties therein prescribed.

9 (b) The Office of Pandemic and Public Health Preparedness shall be
10 responsible for the following:

11 (1) Preparing the state against pandemics, epidemics and other public
12 health emergencies, as defined in section 19a-131 of the general statutes;

13 (2) Developing the state's public health emergency plan and
14 initiatives in coordination with the Commissioner of Public Health;

15 (3) (A) Establishing and maintaining an inventory of a strategic
16 reserve of necessary equipment in the event of a pandemic, epidemic or

17 other public health emergency, including, but not limited to, hand
18 sanitizer, ventilators, hospital beds, modes of transportation, gloves,
19 masks, gowns and other personal protective equipment and equipment
20 and space for vaccine storage; (B) testing and inspecting the items in
21 such strategic reserve on a quarterly basis to ensure that such items have
22 not expired and remain in working order; and (C) establishing a
23 protocol for access to such strategic reserve;

24 (4) Establishing and maintaining a directory of businesses in the state
25 that produce items that could be included in such strategic reserve or
26 otherwise be used to prevent or respond to a pandemic, epidemic or
27 other public health emergency;

28 (5) Connecting small businesses to local providers of personal
29 protective equipment; and

30 (6) Developing and proposing policies to (A) support and secure the
31 state's medical supply chain, (B) restore jobs at the conclusion of any
32 pandemic, epidemic or other public health emergency, and (C) establish
33 and support training programs to increase the availability of necessary
34 staff during a pandemic, epidemic or other public health emergency.

35 (c) In performing the duties set forth in this section, the Office of
36 Pandemic and Public Health Preparedness may request the assistance
37 of the staffs and resources of the Department of Public Health, the
38 Department of Administrative Services, the Department of Education,
39 the Labor Department, the Department of Economic and Community
40 Development, the Department of Emergency Services and Public
41 Protection, the Department of Social Services and all other state
42 departments, agencies and commissions as necessary. The office may
43 also request the assistance of local health directors and may utilize any
44 other public or private agencies, groups or individuals who are
45 appropriate and who may be available to assist in performing such
46 duties.

47 (d) Not later than January first, annually, the executive director of the

48 Office of Pandemic and Public Health Preparedness shall submit a
49 report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general
50 statutes, to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly
51 having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets
52 of state agencies and public health, the Committee on Pandemic and
53 Public Health Preparedness, established pursuant to section 2 of this act,
54 and the Public Health Preparedness Advisory Committee, established
55 pursuant to section 19a-131g of the general statutes, as amended by this
56 act. Such report shall include a summary of the office's activities during
57 the previous year and an inventory and assessment of the strategic
58 reserve established pursuant to subsection (b) of this section.

59 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2021*) (a) There is established a
60 Committee on Pandemic and Public Health Preparedness to review and
61 advise on the state's planning for and response to pandemics, epidemics
62 and other public health emergencies, as defined in section 19a-131 of the
63 general statutes.

64 (b) The committee shall consist of the following members: (1) The
65 Governor, or the Governor's designee; (2) the speaker of the House of
66 Representatives, or the speaker's designee; (3) the president pro tempore
67 of the Senate, or the president's designee; (4) the majority leader of the
68 House of Representatives, or the majority leader's designee; (5) the
69 majority leader of the Senate, or the majority leader's designee; (6) the
70 minority leader of the House of Representatives, or the minority leader's
71 designee; (7) the minority leader of the Senate, or the minority leader's
72 designee; and (8) the chairpersons and ranking members of the joint
73 standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of
74 matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies and
75 public health, or their designees.

76 (c) The members of the committee shall select the chairperson of the
77 committee from among the members of the committee. Such
78 chairperson shall schedule the first meeting of the committee, which
79 shall be held not later than thirty days after the effective date of this
80 section. The committee shall meet on a quarterly basis, except the

81 committee shall meet on a biweekly basis during any period in which a
82 public health emergency is declared pursuant to section 19a-131a of the
83 general statutes.

84 (d) The council shall have the following powers and duties:

85 (1) To review the policies and practices of the Office of Pandemic and
86 Public Health Preparedness and advise the office on such policies and
87 practices;

88 (2) To develop and recommend policies for improving the state's
89 preparedness for and response to pandemics, epidemics and other
90 public health emergencies;

91 (3) To review all spending by state agencies in response to a
92 pandemic, epidemic or other public health emergency;

93 (4) To obtain from any executive department, board, commission or
94 other agency of the state such assistance and data, including, but not
95 limited to, financial data and contingency plans for pandemics,
96 epidemics and other public health emergencies, as necessary and
97 available to carry out the purposes of this section; and

98 (5) To perform such other acts as may be necessary and appropriate
99 to carry out the duties described in this section.

100 (e) The administrative staff of the joint standing committees of the
101 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public
102 health and appropriations and the budgets of state agencies shall serve
103 as administrative staff of the task force.

104 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2021*) The veterinary medical diagnostic
105 laboratory operated by The University of Connecticut shall track
106 potential and active animal pandemics and epidemics in the state and
107 assess the risk of transmission from any such pandemic or epidemic to
108 humans. If said laboratory identifies an animal pandemic or epidemic
109 and determines that such animal pandemic or epidemic poses a risk of

110 transmission to humans, said laboratory shall immediately notify the
111 Office of Pandemic and Public Health Preparedness and the Committee
112 on Pandemic and Public Health Preparedness.

113 Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Not later than January 1, 2022,
114 the Department of Education shall submit a report, in accordance with
115 the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint
116 standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of
117 matters relating to education. Such report shall include a plan to address
118 staff shortages in schools that may occur as a result of a pandemic or
119 epidemic, which shall include, but need not be limited to, a proposal for
120 school districts to share available teachers on a limited time basis.

121 Sec. 5. (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Office of Pandemic and Public
122 Health Preparedness shall develop a proposal for a comprehensive
123 program to support essential workers in the health care, transportation
124 and food service industries both during and following a pandemic,
125 epidemic or other public health emergency, as defined in section 19a-
126 131 of the general statutes. The office shall assess the feasibility and
127 necessity of including the following elements in such program: (1)
128 Support for apprenticeship training programs; (2) assistance in
129 accessing the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program; (3) tuition
130 support for the training of such essential workers; (4) student loan debt
131 assistance; (5) assistance in accessing the state's unemployment system
132 for individuals who lack Internet or computer access; (6) in collaboration
133 with the Department of Agriculture, local and regional boards of
134 education and farmers in the state, the provision of food resources for
135 those in need, including, but not limited to, the establishment of
136 greenhouses in areas that have limited access to affordable and
137 nutritious food; (7) rental, mortgage, heating, utility and Internet access
138 assistance; and (8) a direct access telephone line for individuals who are
139 landlords to ensure that rent and mortgage resources are directed to
140 such landlords.

141 (b) Not later than January 1, 2022, the Office of Pandemic and Public
142 Health Preparedness shall submit a report, in accordance with the

143 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing
144 committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
145 relating to public health and appropriations and the budgets of state
146 agencies. Such report shall include (1) legislative recommendations to
147 implement such program, and (2) a plan to provide funding for such
148 program.

149 Sec. 6. Section 19a-131g of the general statutes is repealed and the
150 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

151 The Commissioner of Public Health and the executive director of the
152 Office of Pandemic and Public Health Preparedness shall establish a
153 Public Health Preparedness Advisory Committee for purposes of
154 advising the Department of Public Health and the Office of Pandemic
155 and Public Health Preparedness on matters concerning emergency
156 responses to a public health emergency. The advisory committee shall
157 consist of the Commissioner of Public Health, the executive director of
158 the Office of Pandemic and Public Health Preparedness, the
159 Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection, the
160 president pro tempore of the Senate, the speaker of the House of
161 Representatives, the majority and minority leaders of both houses of the
162 General Assembly and the chairpersons and ranking members of the
163 joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance
164 of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies,
165 public health, public safety and the judiciary, and representatives of
166 town, city, borough and district directors of health, as appointed by the
167 commissioner, and any other organization or persons that the
168 commissioner deems relevant to the issues of public health
169 preparedness. [Upon the request of the commissioner, the] The Public
170 Health Preparedness Advisory Committee [may] shall meet on a
171 quarterly basis and when otherwise requested by the commissioner to
172 review the plan for emergency responses to a public health emergency
173 and other matters as deemed necessary by the commissioner.

174 Sec. 7. Section 4-5 of the general statutes is repealed and the following
175 is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

176 As used in sections 4-6, 4-7 and 4-8, the term "department head"
177 means Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, Commissioner
178 of Administrative Services, Commissioner of Revenue Services,
179 Banking Commissioner, Commissioner of Children and Families,
180 Commissioner of Consumer Protection, Commissioner of Correction,
181 Commissioner of Economic and Community Development, State Board
182 of Education, Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public
183 Protection, Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection,
184 Commissioner of Agriculture, Commissioner of Public Health,
185 Insurance Commissioner, Labor Commissioner, Commissioner of
186 Mental Health and Addiction Services, Commissioner of Social Services,
187 Commissioner of Developmental Services, Commissioner of Motor
188 Vehicles, Commissioner of Transportation, Commissioner of Veterans
189 Affairs, Commissioner of Housing, Commissioner of Aging and
190 Disability Services, the Commissioner of Early Childhood, the executive
191 director of the Office of Military Affairs, the executive director of the
192 Office of Health Strategy, the executive director of the Office of
193 Pandemic and Public Health Preparedness and the executive director of
194 the Technical Education and Career System. As used in sections 4-6 and
195 4-7, "department head" also means the Commissioner of Education.

196 Sec. 8. Section 4-5 of the general statutes, as amended by section 6 of
197 public act 17-237, section 279 of public act 17-2 of the June special
198 session, section 20 of public act 18-182 and section 283 of public act 19-
199 117, is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective*
200 *July 1, 2022*):

201 As used in sections 4-6, 4-7 and 4-8, the term "department head"
202 means Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, Commissioner
203 of Administrative Services, Commissioner of Revenue Services,
204 Banking Commissioner, Commissioner of Children and Families,
205 Commissioner of Consumer Protection, Commissioner of Correction,
206 Commissioner of Economic and Community Development, State Board
207 of Education, Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public
208 Protection, Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection,

209 Commissioner of Agriculture, Commissioner of Public Health,
210 Insurance Commissioner, Labor Commissioner, Commissioner of
211 Mental Health and Addiction Services, Commissioner of Social Services,
212 Commissioner of Developmental Services, Commissioner of Motor
213 Vehicles, Commissioner of Transportation, Commissioner of Veterans
214 Affairs, Commissioner of Housing, Commissioner of Rehabilitation
215 Services, the Commissioner of Early Childhood, the executive director
216 of the Office of Military Affairs, the executive director of the Office of
217 Pandemic and Public Health Preparedness and the executive director of
218 the Technical Education and Career System. As used in sections 4-6 and
219 4-7, "department head" also means the Commissioner of Education.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2021</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2021</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2021</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 5	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 6	<i>July 1, 2021</i>	19a-131g
Sec. 7	<i>July 1, 2021</i>	4-5
Sec. 8	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	4-5

APP Joint Favorable Subst.