STATE OF NEW YORK

8751

IN SENATE

January 8, 2026

Introduced by Sen. SEPULVEDA -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Health

AN ACT in relation to establishing the New York-Dominican health partnership act, creating a commission to study and develop a framework for authorizing New York state-funded health services for eligible seniors and individuals with disabilities residing part-time or full-time in the Dominican Republic, and to explore bilateral health collaboration between the state of New York and the Dominican Republic; and provides for the repeal of such provisions upon expiration thereof

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "New York-Dominican health partnership act".

§ 2. Legislative findings and intent. 1. The legislature finds that a significant number of New York residents, particularly seniors and individuals with disabilities, maintain close cultural, familial, and residential ties with the Dominican Republic, often residing part of the year abroad while remaining eligible for health care and social services in New York state.

2. The legislature further finds that medical services in the Dominican Republic can often be delivered at a substantially lower cost than comparable services in New York, while maintaining acceptable quality standards, particularly when coordinated through accredited facilities.

3. It is the intent of this legislation to explore innovative ways to:

(a) improve health care accessibility and affordability for eligible New York residents abroad;

(b) strengthen bilateral cooperation between the state of New York and the Dominican Republic in public health, medical education, and elder care; and

(c) identify potential state-only pilot programs or federal waiver mechanisms that could permit Medicaid or state health benefits to support care provided in certified Dominican medical institutions.

4. Nothing in this act shall be construed to expand eligibility for federal Medicaid expenditures outside the United States, unless expressly authorized by federal law or waiver.

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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§ 3. Establishment of the New York-Dominican health partnership commission. 1. There is hereby established the New York-Dominican health partnership commission ("the commission").

2. The commission shall consist of nine members, appointed as follows:

(a) The commissioner of health, or their designee;

(b) The commissioner of the office for the aging, or their designee;

(c) The commissioner of temporary and disability assistance, or their designee;

(d) One member appointed by the speaker of the assembly;

(e) One member appointed by the temporary president of the senate;

(f) One member appointed by the governor;

(g) One member representing the Consulate General of the Dominican Republic in New York;

(h) One expert in international health policy from a New York-based university; and

(i) One representative from a recognized Dominican community organization in New York state.

3. The commission shall select from among its members a chairperson and vice-chairperson. Members shall serve without compensation but shall be entitled to reimbursement for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

§ 4. Duties of the commission. The commission shall:

1. Conduct a comprehensive study on the feasibility, cost-effectiveness, and legal requirements of establishing a bilateral health partnership between the state of New York and the Dominican Republic.

2. Explore potential models for:

(a) state-funded pilot programs allowing qualified New York residents to access approved medical services abroad;

(b) accreditation systems for Dominican health facilities meeting New York public health standards;

(c) reciprocal telehealth and information exchange programs;

(d) long-term care partnerships and geriatrics exchange programs; and

(e) opportunities for federal collaboration or waivers under section 1115 of the Social Security Act.

3. Assess potential fiscal savings to New York's Medicaid program and economic benefits for both jurisdictions.

4. Develop recommendations for:

(a) statutory or regulatory changes required at the state level;

(b) potential memoranda of understanding (MOUs) or bilateral agreements between New York and the Dominican Ministry of Public Health; and

(c) next steps toward implementation of a demonstration project.

§ 5. Reporting. The commission shall submit a final report of its findings and recommendations to the governor, the speaker of the assembly, the temporary president of the senate, and the chairs of the health and aging committees no later than eighteen months after the effective date of this act. The report shall include proposed statutory language, fiscal impact estimates, and an implementation plan for potential pilot initiatives.

§ 6. Cooperation of agencies. All departments, divisions, boards, bureaus, commissions, and agencies of the state and its political subdivisions shall provide the commission with any information and assistance it may require in carrying out its duties under this act.

§ 7. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire and be deemed repealed two years after such date.