STATE OF NEW YORK

10209

IN ASSEMBLY

February 12, 2026

Introduced by M. of A. ZINERMAN -- read once and referred to the Committee on Health

AN ACT to amend the public health law, in relation to establishing the office of global public health and international cooperation within the department of health

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

Section 1. Legislative findings and intent. The legislature hereby finds and declares that:

1. New York state is a global center of travel, commerce, diplomacy, education, and migration, and as such is uniquely vulnerable to the rapid importation and transmission of emerging infectious diseases and other global public health threats; and

2. Recent global public health emergencies have demonstrated that early detection, rapid information sharing, and coordinated international scientific collaboration are essential components of effective disease prevention, preparedness, and response; and

3. Technical cooperation, data exchange, and research collaboration between public health authorities, academic institutions, and international health organizations significantly enhance disease surveillance, workforce training, and emergency preparedness capabilities; and

4. Federal disengagement from international public health institutions weakens global disease surveillance networks and increases the risk of delayed detection and response, thereby heightening public health risks for states with high volumes of international travel and commerce; and

5. It is therefore in the interest of the people of the state of New York to establish a permanent state-level infrastructure within the department of health to coordinate lawful, non-binding, technical cooperation with international public health institutions and research partners in order to strengthen disease surveillance, public health preparedness, scientific exchange, and emergency response capacity.

§ 2. The public health law is amended by adding a new section 206-c to read as follows:

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

LBD14760-01-6

§ 206-c. Office of global public health and international cooperation. 1. Definitions. For purposes of this section:

(a) "Technical cooperation" shall mean non-binding collaboration related to public health surveillance, data exchange, research, workforce training, scientific education, emergency preparedness, and disease prevention and control.

(b) "International public health institution" shall mean a foreign governmental public health authority, international organization, or multilateral technical agency engaged in disease surveillance, epidemiological research, or public health preparedness, including but not limited to the World Health Organization and agencies of the United Nations.

(c) "Non-binding memorandum of understanding" shall mean a written agreement that does not create legally enforceable obligations, treaty commitments, or international agreements, and that is limited to technical cooperation and information exchange.

2. Establishment. There shall be established within the department an office to be known as the office of global public health and international cooperation, which shall operate under the supervision and direction of the commissioner.

3. Powers and duties. The office of global public health and international cooperation shall have the power and duty to:

(a) coordinate international technical cooperation in the fields of public health surveillance, epidemiology, laboratory science, emergency preparedness, and workforce training, consistent with federal law and constitutional limitations;

(b) facilitate the exchange of public health data, subject to all applicable state and federal privacy and security laws, for the purposes of disease surveillance, early-warning detection, and emergency preparedness;

(c) support and coordinate partnerships between New York-based academic institutions, public health laboratories, hospitals, and international public health institutions, including those designated as World Health Organization collaborating centers;

(d) promote research collaboration and scientific exchange programs to strengthen New York state's public health workforce and technical capacity;

(e) provide technical assistance and consultation to state agencies and local health departments regarding global disease threats, preparedness planning, and emerging public health risks;

(f) develop and maintain early-warning systems for emerging infectious diseases and other global public health threats, in coordination with state, federal, and international partners;

(g) apply for, accept, and administer grants, gifts, donations, and other funds from public or private sources, including philanthropic organizations, research institutions, and public-private partnerships, consistent with applicable law;

(h) enter into non-binding memoranda of understanding for technical cooperation, consistent with subdivision four of this section; and

(i) perform such other duties as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this section.

4. Limitations. (a) Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize the office of global public health and international cooperation, the department, or the state to enter into any treaty, compact, or agreement constituting foreign policy, diplomacy, or international relations reserved to the federal government.

(b) All memoranda of understanding and cooperative arrangements authorized pursuant to this section shall be strictly limited to non-binding technical cooperation, research collaboration, workforce training, and public health preparedness functions.

(c) Nothing in this section shall be construed to impair or supersede the authority of the federal government, including the centers for disease control and prevention, the department of health and human services, or any other federal agency.

5. Annual report. The office of global public health and international cooperation shall submit an annual global health risk and preparedness report to the governor, the temporary president of the senate, the speaker of the assembly and the chairs of the senate and assembly health committees, which shall include, but not be limited to:

(a) an assessment of emerging global public health risks with potential impact on New York state;

(b) a summary of technical cooperation activities, partnerships, and memoranda of understanding;

(c) an evaluation of New York state's preparedness capacity to respond to global public health threats;

(d) recommendations for legislative, regulatory, or budgetary actions to strengthen public health preparedness; and

(e) an accounting of all funds received and expended by such office.

6. Staffing. The commissioner may appoint such professional, technical, and administrative staff as may be necessary to carry out the duties of the office of global public health and international cooperation, within amounts appropriated therefor.

7. Severability. If any provision of this section or its application shall be adjudged invalid, such judgment shall not affect or impair the validity of the remainder of this section or the application thereof to other persons or circumstances.

§ 3. This act shall take effect on the one hundred eightieth day after it shall have become a law.