§ 958. Lyme and tick-borne diseases working group. 1. There is hereby created in the executive department a Lyme and tick-borne diseases working group consisting of the:

(a) commissioner of health;

(b) commissioner of the office of mental health;

(c) commissioner of environmental conservation;

(d) superintendent of financial services, who shall serve ex officio and who may designate representatives to act on their behalf; and

(e) six additional members to be appointed by the governor.

2. The governor shall also appoint eight members to the working group on the recommendation of the legislative leaders as follows:

(a) the temporary president of the senate shall recommend three members;

(b) the speaker of the assembly shall recommend three members;

(c) the minority leader of the senate shall recommend one member; and

(d) the minority leader of the assembly shall recommend one member.

3. Members appointed to the working group shall include, but not be limited to, at least one of each of the following, each of whom must have experience working with issues related to Lyme and tick-borne diseases:

(a) an infectious disease specialist;

(b) a general practitioner;

(c) a mental health practitioner;

(d) an entomologist;

(e) an epidemiologist;

(f) a representative of health insurance providers; and

(g) a representative of a tick-borne disease advocacy organization.

4. The commissioner of health shall serve, ex officio, as the chair of the working group, and the governor shall designate the vice chair of the working group. In appointing members of the working group, appointing authorities shall ensure that such members, as a group, represent diverse scientific perspectives relevant to the duties of the working group. The members of the working group, except those who serve ex officio, shall be allowed their actual and necessary expenses

incurred in the performance of their duties under this article but shall receive no additional compensation for services rendered pursuant to this article.

5. The working group, on call of the chair, shall meet at least twice each year and at such other times as may be necessary. The working group may establish quorum requirements and other rules and procedures regarding conduct of its meetings and other affairs.

6. The working group shall have the following powers and responsibilities:

(a) review current best practices for the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of Lyme and tick-borne diseases, as well as any reports or recommendations from the twenty-first century workgroup for disease elimination and reduction, pursuant to section two hundred sixty-six of the public health law;

(b) provide recommendations including, but not limited to:

(i) improvements to the delivery of care for patients and suspected patients of Lyme and tick-borne diseases, particularly those from endemic areas of the state;

(ii) collaborations among county departments of health to promote effective strategies to combat Lyme and tick-borne diseases, including best practices for prevention and reporting;

(iii) interagency collaborations to streamline state efforts to combat the spread of Lyme and tick-borne diseases;

(iv) identifying opportunities to collaborate with the federal government, non-profit entities, or private organizations on projects addressing these diseases;

(v) data collection and reporting requirements of Lyme and tick-borne disease, including but not limited to, those for healthcare providers; and

(vi) any other regulations or guidelines concerning Lyme and tick-borne diseases; and

(c) prepare and issue a report on the working group's findings and recommendations by May first, two thousand twenty-three to the governor, the temporary president of the senate and the speaker of the assembly.

7. If any appointments to the working group are not made by April fifteenth, two thousand nineteen, then the working group may proceed to meet and fulfill its responsibilities, pursuant to paragraphs two and three of this section, without such appointees.