

2023 -- H 6516

LC003198

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- OFFICE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES HEALTH EQUITY ZONE INITIATIVE

Introduced By: Representative Arthur Handy

Date Introduced: June 13, 2023

Referred To: House Health & Human Services

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 42-7.2 of the General Laws entitled "Office of Health and Human
2 Services" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

3 **42-7.2-6.2. Health equity zone initiative and administration.**

4 (a) For purposes of this section, "health equity zone initiative (HEZ)" means a health
5 equity-centered approach to prevention of inequities, that facilitates place-based, community-led
6 solutions that address a broad range of social, economic, and environmental factors that influence
7 health outcomes.

8 (b) All of the state agencies under the jurisdiction of the executive office of health and
9 human services, (EOHHS) shall assist and manage resources that are focused on addressing these
10 same social, economic and environmental factors to positively influence health outcomes. The
11 secretary shall determine in collaboration with the department directors whether and which officers,
12 employees, agencies, advisory councils, committees, commissions, and/or task forces of the HEZ
13 initiative shall be utilized by the office.

14 (c) The secretary of EOHHS shall be responsible for the management, oversight, and
15 direction of the HEZ initiative to foster and promote the enhanced collaboration between and
16 among its agencies, for the purpose of creating greater efficiencies, improving alignment of state
17 resources and coordinating collaborative funding requests, that focus on reducing health inequities.

18 (d) The EOHHS through the HEZ initiative shall develop sustainable infrastructure and

1 support community-identified needs in order to positively impact the social, economic, and
2 environmental conditions driving disparities and establish measurable improvements in health
3 outcomes.

4 (e) The secretary shall report to the governor and general assembly from time to time,
5 together with the submission of drafts of legislation which the secretary deems necessary to
6 implement improvements in the HEZ initiative.

7 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- OFFICE OF HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES HEALTH EQUITY ZONE INITIATIVE

1 This act would charge the EOHHS with the responsibility to fund and administer the health
2 equity zone initiative by engaging community members and partners to improve health outcomes
3 for all Rhode Islanders.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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