

2026 -- H 8365 SUBSTITUTE A

LC006207/SUB A

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH
COLLABORATION

Introduced By: Representatives Fogarty, Handy, Bennett, Donovan, Spears, Cotter,
Carson, Speakman, McGaw, and Craven

Date Introduced: March 27, 2026

Referred To: House Health & Human Services

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 23 of the General Laws entitled "HEALTH AND SAFETY" is hereby
2 amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 106

4 INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH COLLABORATION

5 **23-106-1. Definitions.**

6 As used in this chapter:

7 (1) "Department" means the Rhode Island department of health.

8 (2) "Global outbreak response network" means an international collaboration of public
9 health institutions coordinated by the World Health Organization or similar international public
10 health authority for the purpose of disease surveillance and outbreak response.

11 (3) "Public health collaboration agreement" means an agreement between the department
12 and a national or international public health entity to share expertise, training, surveillance
13 information, or technical assistance related to infectious disease response.

14 **23-106-2. Authority of the department.**

15 The department is authorized to:

16 (1) Participate in international public-health collaboration network including, but not
17 limited, to the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network ("GOARN").

18 (2) Enter into public-health collaboration agreements with federal agencies, international

1 organizations, academic institutions, and public-health authorities.

2 (3) Designate a state public-health office, department of health laboratory, or program as
3 the institutional partner representing the state in such networks.

4 (4) Participate in training programs, data-sharing initiatives, and technical assistance
5 programs related to outbreak detection and response.

6 (5) Provide voluntary deployment of qualified public-health personnel where possible to
7 assist in outbreak investigations or response efforts coordinated through such networks.

8 **23-106-3. Privacy and legal protections.**

9 Participation authorized under this chapter shall:

10 (1) Comply with all applicable federal and state privacy laws.

11 (2) Protect individually identifiable health information consistent with the Health Insurance
12 Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (“HIPAA”) and state public health confidentiality
13 statutes.

14 (3) Not transfer regulatory or policymaking authority of the state to any international
15 organization.

16 **23-106-4. Coordination with federal authorities.**

17 The department shall coordinate participation in international public-health collaboration
18 networks with relevant agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, when
19 appropriate.

20 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 HEALTH AND SAFETY -- INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH
COLLABORATION

- 1 This act would authorize the department of health to participate in international public-
- 2 health collaboration networks.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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