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A bill to be entitled

An act relating to the Office of Minority Health and Health Equity; creating s. 381.735, F.S.; requiring the Office of Minority Health and Health Equity to develop and promote the statewide implementation of certain policies, programs, and practices; requiring one representative from each county health department to serve as a minority health liaison for a specified purpose; requiring the office to use all available resources and pursue funding opportunities to achieve this purpose; specifying duties for the office; requiring the office to maintain on its website specified information; requiring the office to serve as a liaison to and assist certain federal offices; authorizing the Department of Health to adopt rules; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 381.735, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

381.735 Office of Minority Health and Health Equity.—
(1) The Office of Minority Health and Health Equity
established under s. 20.43(9) shall develop and promote the
statewide implementation of policies, programs, and practices

26 | that increase health equity in this state, including, but not
27 | limited to, increased access to and quality of health care
28 | services for racial and ethnic minority populations. One
29 | representative from each county health department shall serve as
30 | a minority health liaison to assist the office in implementing
31 | this section. The office shall use all available resources and
32 | pursue opportunities for increased funding to achieve the
33 | purpose of this section.

34 | (2) The office shall coordinate with agencies,
35 | organizations, and providers across this state to do all of the
36 | following:

37 | (a) Gather and analyze data regarding disparities in
38 | health status, quality of health care, and access to health care
39 | services for racial and ethnic minority populations in this
40 | state.

41 | (b) Develop mechanisms that support better information
42 | dissemination and education about health disparities and improve
43 | access to and delivery of health care services to racial and
44 | ethnic minority populations in this state.

45 | (c) Support minority health liaisons by facilitating
46 | access to and the exchange of information related to health
47 | promotion, preventive health services, and education in the
48 | appropriate use of care.

49 | (d) Conduct demonstration projects and evaluations to
50 | ensure the success and sustainability of policies, programs, and

51 practices that increase health equity in this state.

52 (e) Promote the use of community health workers to improve
53 the cultural competency of services and build individual and
54 community self-sufficiency.

55 (f) Gather and analyze data regarding the prevalence of
56 racial and ethnic minority populations at risk of involvement
57 with the criminal justice system, the juvenile justice system,
58 and the foster care system or at risk for homelessness, and any
59 disparities in such involvement or access to appropriate
60 behavioral health services by those populations when compared to
61 other populations in this state.

62 (g) Promote the creation of or participation in programs
63 that divert individuals with mental health and substance use
64 disorders from the criminal justice system and ensure the
65 availability of quality behavioral health services to the
66 populations specified in paragraph (f).

67 (h) Develop and implement programs that improve access to
68 health care services for individuals with limited proficiency in
69 the English language by providing access to bilingual providers
70 or interpretive services.

71 (3) The office shall maintain all of the following on its
72 website, updated at least annually:

73 (a) Current data on health disparities and issues
74 affecting racial and ethnic minority populations in this state.

75 (b) Information about and links to resources available to

76 | racial and ethnic minority populations in this state.

77 | (c) Resources for providers who wish to improve cultural
78 | competency, understand health disparities, and increase the
79 | quality of and access to health care services for racial and
80 | ethnic minority populations in this state. These resources must
81 | include, but need not be limited to, minority health literature,
82 | research, and referrals; capacity-building and technical
83 | assistance services; and training materials for implementing
84 | nationally recognized evidence-based practices for culturally
85 | and linguistically appropriate health care services.

86 | (d) Contact information for local minority health
87 | liaisons.

88 | (4) The office shall serve as a liaison to and assist the
89 | federal Offices of Minority Health and Regional Health
90 | Operations, as appropriate.

91 | (5) The department may adopt rules to implement this
92 | section.

93 | Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2021.