

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA**  
**SESSION 2023**

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**HOUSE BILL 108**

Short Title: Local Communicable Disease Programs/Funds. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives White, Potts, Lambeth, and Sasser (Primary Sponsors).

*For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.*

Referred to: Health, if favorable, Appropriations, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

February 15, 2023

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH, TO CONTINUE THE STATE'S PROGRESS IN COMMUNICABLE DISEASE RESPONSE.

Whereas, there are over 80 reportable communicable diseases in North Carolina that local health departments (LHDs) are responsible for investigating and managing; and

Whereas, the United States is approaching a record number of Avian Influenza (Bird Flu) outbreaks in wild birds and poultry, which is a potential threat to the public health; and

Whereas, LHDs must respond to the rise and spread of newly emerging and re-emerging communicable diseases; and

Whereas, in 2018, the North Carolina Legislature appropriated six million seven hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$6,750,000) in recurring funds for communicable disease response in the 2018 Appropriations Act, which was ratified by the General Assembly, but was subsequently vetoed by the Governor; and

Whereas, without this funding for communicable disease response, LHDs were forced to scramble to identify additional staff and resources to respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency; and

Whereas, in the 2021 Appropriations Act, the General Assembly made a down payment of thirty-six million dollars (\$36,000,000) in nonrecurring federal funds for the 2021-2023 fiscal biennium to begin modernizing the State's local communicable disease response system by expanding communicable disease surveillance, detection, control, and prevention activities to address the COVID-19 public health emergency and other communicable disease challenges; and

Whereas, these funds have been foundational to the efforts of LHDs to respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency and to address other communicable disease challenges; and

Whereas, LHDs in North Carolina remain understaffed, with an estimated shortage of 1,700 public health staff at the local level, including communicable disease nurses and other professionals, who are vital to the State's communicable disease response; Now, therefore, The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.(a)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, the sum of twenty-five million dollars (\$25,000,000) in recurring funds for the 2023-2024 fiscal year and the sum of twenty-five million dollars (\$25,000,000) in recurring funds for the 2024-2025 fiscal year to be allocated to local health departments, as provided in subsection (b) of this section, to do all of the following:



- 1 (1) To continue to address the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 public health  
2 emergency and other communicable disease challenges.
- 3 (2) To better prepare the State for emerging and re-emerging public health threats.
- 4 (3) To retain and hire additional communicable disease staff, including public  
5 health nurses and other public health professionals, who are vital not only to  
6 maintaining North Carolina's communicable disease response but also to  
7 ensuring that the essential public health services described in G.S. 130A-1.1  
8 are available and accessible to the population served by the local health  
9 department.

10 **SECTION 1.(b)** In the distribution of these funds to local health departments, for  
11 each year of the 2023-2025 fiscal biennium, the Department of Health and Human Services,  
12 Division of Public Health, shall do all of the following:

- 13 (1) Divide twelve million five hundred thousand dollars (\$12,500,000) equally  
14 among the local health departments based on the number of counties served  
15 by each local health department.
- 16 (2) Distribute the remaining twelve million five hundred thousand dollars  
17 (\$12,500,000) to local health departments based upon the percentage of the  
18 State population served by each of the local health departments.
- 19 (3) Begin distributing the funds allocated under this section no later than (i) 60  
20 days after the date the Office of State Budget and Management and the Office  
21 of the State Controller establish the certified budget for the Department of  
22 Health and Human Services for the 2023-2024 fiscal year and (ii) 60 days after  
23 the date the Office of State Budget and Management and the Office of the  
24 State Controller establish the certified budget for the Department of Health  
25 and Human Services for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

26 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2023.