

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2015**

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SENATE BILL 231

Short Title: Study Unified Public Health System. (Public)

Sponsors: Senator Hartsell (Primary Sponsor).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate.

March 11, 2015

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES TO STUDY THE CONCEPT OF A UNIFIED PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM AND THE FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A UNIFIED PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM WITHIN THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. By no later than May 1, 2015, the Department of Health and Human Services shall study the concept of a unified public health system for the State of North Carolina and report on the feasibility of establishing a unified public health system in this State to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services and the Program Evaluation Division. The study and report shall include at least all of the following:

- (1) An evaluation of the state of publicly financed health services in North Carolina compared to at least 12 other states using generally accepted indicators of population health, including, but not limited to, rates of infant mortality, obesity, diabetes, tobacco use, prescription drug and other drug abuse, mental illness, and other diseases and conditions for which public interventions are appropriate.
- (2) A description of the extent and quality of available public health indicators, including collection methods, comprehensiveness, validity, accessibility and availability for research, and use in continuous improvement of public health policies; and an analysis of costs associated with improving deficient data reporting systems.
- (3) An evaluation of the publicly financed health service delivery structure in North Carolina, including identification of State, local, public, and private entities engaged in activities contributing to health outcomes; and a review of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats within the service structure. This evaluation shall take into consideration public health education, including, but not limited to, health education for kindergarten through high school students and education of the public health workforce.
- (4) An evaluation of the governance structure of public health and mental health, including the advantages and disadvantages of current and alternative governance models.
- (5) An evaluation of how health needs and health deficiencies are communicated to State policymakers.



- 1 (6) Recommendations for public strategies and innovations to capitalize on
2 North Carolina's strengths and opportunities for remedying weaknesses and
3 for protecting against threats to health.
4 **SECTION 2.** This act is effective when it becomes law.