

S.185

An act relating to adopting a climate change response plan and regional planning commission involvement in identifying health care-related needs

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

\* \* \* Climate Change Response Plan \* \* \*

Sec. 1. 18 V.S.A. chapter 35 is added to read:

CHAPTER 35. PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

§ 1711. CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE PLAN

The Department of Health, in collaboration with the Chief Prevention Officer established pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 2321, shall develop and adopt a statewide climate change response plan to foster resilience to the impacts of climate change in Vermont.

(1) Using a public health model, the Department's response plan shall seek to prevent and mitigate public health risks caused by climate change in Vermont, with particular attention shown to vulnerable populations, including:

(A) infants and young children;

(B) elders;

(C) persons with physical disabilities;

(D) persons with a chronic or existing medical condition;

(E) persons with low income;

(F) persons who are homeless or lack access to transportation;

(G) persons living in flood plains; and

(H) persons whose employment occurs primarily outdoors.

(2) The response plan shall provide actionable strategies specific to both rural and urban communities in the State, including specific strategies that address:

(A) mental health;

(B) vector-borne diseases;

(C) waterborne and foodborne diseases;

(D) hot weather;

(E) cyanobacteria;

(F) extreme storm events; and

(G) air pollution and pollen.

§ 1712. CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE COMMUNICATION

The Department of Health, in coordination with the regional planning commissions, regional emergency management providers, and the Citizens Assistance Registry for Emergencies, shall develop a plan and communicate with both Vermont communities and each other for the purpose of mitigating and responding to climate change related public health risks in Vermont.

Sec. 2. REPORT; CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE PLAN

On or before July 1, 2021, the Department of Health shall submit the climate change response plan adopted pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 1711 to the

House Committees on Health Care and on Human Services and to the Senate  
Committee on Health and Welfare.

\* \* \* Regional Planning Commission Involvement in Identifying  
Health Care-Related Needs \* \* \*

Sec. 3. 24 V.S.A. § 4345a is amended to read:

§ 4345a. DUTIES OF REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSIONS

A regional planning commission created under this chapter shall:

\* \* \*

(21) Consult with and assist hospitals licensed pursuant to 18 V.S.A. chapter 43 regarding the development of health needs assessments and other initiatives as needed in accordance with 18 V.S.A. § 9405a.

(22) Consult with and assist the Agency of Human Services, Department of Health, and Vermont Emergency Management to incorporate public health and safety concerns related to climate change into State and local emergency and hazard mitigation, response, and recovery plans.

Sec. 4. 18 V.S.A. § 9405a is amended to read:

§ 9405a. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

(a) Each hospital shall have a protocol for meaningful public participation in its strategic planning process for identifying and addressing health care needs that the hospital provides or could provide in its service area. Regional planning commissions shall be available for consultation and assistance

pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 4345a. Needs identified through the process shall be integrated with the hospital's long-term planning. Each hospital shall post on its website a description of its identified needs, strategic initiatives developed to address the identified needs, annual progress on implementation of the proposed initiatives, opportunities for public participation, and the ways in which the hospital ensures access to appropriate mental health care that meets standards of quality, access, and affordability equivalent to other components of health care as part of an integrated, holistic system of care. Hospitals may meet the community health needs assessment and implementation plan requirement through compliance with the relevant Internal Revenue Service community health needs assessment requirements for nonprofit hospitals.

\* \* \*

\* \* \* Effective Date \* \* \*

Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2020.