1	S.2
2	Introduced by Senator Lyons
3	Referred to Committee on
4	Date:
5	Subject: Health; health equity; Office of Health Equity
6	Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to establish the
7	Office of Health Equity within the Department of Health.
8 9	An act relating to establishing the Office of Health Equity within the Department of Health
10	It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:
11	Sec. 1. 3 V.S.A. § 5003 is amended to read:
12	§ 5003. DUTIES OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF RACIAL EQUITY
13	(a) The Executive Director of Racial Equity (Director) shall work with the
14	agencies and departments to implement a program of continuing coordination
15	and improvement of activities in State government in order to combat systemic
16	racial disparities and measure progress toward fair and impartial governance,
17	including:
18	(1) overseeing a comprehensive organizational review to identify
19	systemic racism in each of the three branches of State government and
20	inventory systems in place that engender racial disparities;

1	(2) managing and overseeing the statewide collection of race-based data
2	to determine the nature and scope of racial discrimination within all systems of
3	State government; and
4	(3) developing a model fairness and diversity policy and reviewing and
5	making recommendations regarding the fairness and diversity policies held by
6	all State government systems; and
7	(4) temporarily overseeing the establishment of the Health Equity
8	Advisory Commission established pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 252 until the Office
9	of Health Equity is established.
10	* * *
11	Sec. 2. 18 V.S.A. § 252 is amended to read:
12	§ 252. HEALTH EQUITY ADVISORY COMMISSION
13	* * *
14	(c) Powers and duties. The Advisory Commission shall:
15	(1) provide guidance on the development of the Office of Health Equity,
16	which shall be established based on the Advisory Commission's
17	recommendations not later than January 1, 2023, including on:
18	(A) the structure, responsibilities, and jurisdiction of the Office;
19	(B) whether the Office shall be independent and, if not, in which
20	State agency or department it shall be situated;

(C) how the Office shall be staffed;

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1	(D) the populations served and specific issues addressed by the
2	Office;
3	(E) the duties of the Office, including how grant funds shall be
4	managed and distributed; and
5	(F) the time frame and necessary steps to establish the Office;
6	(2) provide advice and make recommendations to the Office of Health
7	Equity once established, including input on:
8	(A) any rules or policies proposed by the Office;
9	(B) the awarding of grants and the development of programs and
10	services;
11	(C) the needs, priorities, programs, and policies relating to the health
12	of individuals who are Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color; individuals
13	who are LGBTQ; and individuals with disabilities; and
14	(D) any other issue on which the Office of Health Equity requests
15	assistance from the Advisory Commission;
16	(3) review, monitor, and advise all State agencies regarding the impact
17	of current and emerging State policies, procedures, practices, laws, and rules
18	on the health of individuals who are Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color;
19	individuals who are LGBTQ; and individuals with disabilities;
20	(4) identify and examine the limitations and problems associated with
21	existing laws, rules, programs, and services related to the health status of

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1	individuals who are Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color; individuals who
2	are LGBTQ; and individuals with disabilities;
3	(5) advise the Department of Health and the General Assembly on any
4	funding decisions relating to eliminating health disparities and promoting
5	health equity, including the distribution of federal monies related to COVID-
6	19;
7	(6) to the extent funds are available for the purpose, distribute grants
8	that stimulate the development of community-based and neighborhood-based
9	projects that will improve the health outcomes of individuals who are Black,
10	Indigenous, and Persons of Color; individuals who are LGBTQ; and
11	individuals with disabilities; and
12	(7) advise the General Assembly on efforts to improve cultural
13	competency, cultural humility, and antiracism in the health care system
14	through training and continuing education requirements for health care
15	providers and other clinical professionals.
16	* * *
17	Sec. 3. 18 V.S.A. § 254 is added to read:
18	§ 254. OFFICE OF HEALTH EQUITY
19	(a) There is established the Office of Health Equity within the Department
20	of Health for the purpose of eliminating avoidable and unjust disparities in

health among Vermonters. The Office shall use a systemic and comprehensive

1	approach that addresses those social, economic, and environmental factors that
2	influence health outcomes.
3	(b) The Office of Health Equity shall be directed by an Executive Director,
4	an individual who shall be qualified by reason of education, expertise, and
5	experience and who may have a professional degree in public health, social or
6	environmental justice, or a related field. The Executive Director shall serve or
7	a full-time basis and shall be exempt from classified service.
8	Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE
9	This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.