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Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Announces Actions to Require Reporting of COVID-19 Demographic Data

04/22/2020

TRENTON – Governor Murphy today signed legislation (S2357) which will require hospitals to report demographic data to the Department of Health. In conjunction with this signing, the COVID-19 Information Hub (<https://covid19.nj.gov/#live-updates>) has been updated with preliminary racial data that has already been collected.

“Understanding the impact of COVID-19 by demographic group is critical to ensure equity in our response to this virus,” **said Governor Murphy**. “We must do everything we can to protect the most vulnerable groups in our state during this unprecedented crisis. This data will inform our efforts and allow us to make sure that no one is left behind.”

S2357 requires hospitals to report demographic data including age, ethnicity, gender, and race of individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19, who have died from COVID-19, and who have tried to get testing but have been turned away.

Primary sponsors of S2357 include Senators Ronald Rice, Nia Gill, Kristin Corrado, and Assemblymembers Benjie Wimberly, Verlina Reynolds-Jackson, and Nancy Pinkin.

“Our country has an incredibly poor history of health care when it comes to the treatment of minorities, especially in the Black community,” **said Senator Ronald Rice**. “If hospitals have limited funding and decide to pull resources away from sick minorities, this causes all sorts of problems. Collecting and then receiving this data will allow for us to know which hospitals need more funding and resources in order to properly care for our minority populations.”

“Without racial demographic data we will have no way to identify and address ongoing disparities and health inequities that risk accelerating the spread of COVID-19,” **said Senator Nia Gill**. “Inequalities in treatment and diagnosis can have significant and severe impacts on minorities who are already at a higher risk of diseases such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and other chronic illnesses. In order to address these disparities, we must have data on who is being tested, who is being treated, and what the treatment outcomes are.”

“Coronavirus has had a devastating impact on our state and the nation, appearing to disproportionately impact men and the African-American community,” **said Senator Kristin Corrado**. “The more demographic information we can gather from our hospitals on infections, the better we can identify, react, study, and prevent new COVID-19 cases in vulnerable populations. Arming our health commissioner with data and statistics can help match medical care to those at greater risk.”

case
Back
to top

“Decades of systemic poverty, lack of sufficient healthcare and chronic unemployment in our communities, especially black communities, lends to the increased risk of coronavirus hitting residents living below the poverty line harder than others. Those with underlying conditions such as heart disease, high blood pressure and other medical conditions are more susceptible to the virus, which are conditions that are very prevalent in communities of color,” **Assembly sponsors Benjie Wimberly, Verlina Reynolds-Jackson, and Nancy Pinkin said in a joint statement.** “We can’t gauge an appropriate response without knowing the numbers. Requiring hospitals to compile demographic data will help us zero in on the communities who have suffered the most during this pandemic and to figure out what must be done to protect them as we continue to fight COVID-19.”

U.S. Senator Cory Booker recently introduced legislation

(<https://www.booker.senate.gov/news/press/booker-joins-warren-to-introduce-bicameral-legislation-to-require-federal-government-to-collect-and-report-coronavirus-demographic-data--including-race-and-ethnicity>) that would require the federal government to collect and report demographic data on COVID-19 cases, including data on race and ethnicity.

“We have a solemn obligation to protect every New Jerseyan from the coronavirus. This means we can’t leave anyone behind,” **said U.S. Senator Cory Booker.** “Deep-seated health disparities faced by communities of color in New Jersey and across our nation have been magnified and exacerbated by this public health crisis. The collection of this critical data here in New Jersey will help us better understand the scope of health disparities related to COVID-19 so together we can act to end them. I applaud Governor Murphy and the bill sponsors in the New Jersey Legislature for their leadership through this crisis, and their continued efforts to protect every New Jerseyan, including our most vulnerable.”

Governor Phil Murphy

[Home \(/governor/\)](/governor/)

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[Governor Phil Murphy \(/governor/admin/about/\)](/governor/admin/about/)

[Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver \(/governor/admin/lt/\)](/governor/admin/lt/)

[First Lady Tammy Snyder Murphy \(/governor/admin/fl/\)](/governor/admin/fl/)

[Cabinet \(/governor/admin/cabinet/\)](/governor/admin/cabinet/)

[Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency](/governor/admin/affordablehealthcare/index.shtml)

[\(/governor/admin/affordablehealthcare/index.shtml\)](/governor/admin/affordablehealthcare/index.shtml)

[Boards, Commissions & Authorities \(/governor/admin/bca/\)](/governor/admin/bca/)

[Internship Opportunities \(/governor/admin/internship.shtml\)](/governor/admin/internship.shtml)

[Governor’s Residence - Drumthwacket \(http://drumthwacket.org/\)](http://drumthwacket.org/)

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[Economy & Jobs \(/governor/initiatives/#Economy\)](/governor/initiatives/#Economy)

[Education \(/governor/initiatives/#Education\)](/governor/initiatives/#Education)

[Environment \(/governor/initiatives/#Environment\)](/governor/initiatives/#Environment)

[Health \(/governor/initiatives/#Health\)](/governor/initiatives/#Health)

[Law & Justice \(/governor/initiatives/#Justice\)](/governor/initiatives/#Justice)

[Transportation \(/governor/initiatives/#Transportation\)](/governor/initiatives/#Transportation)

News & Events

[Press Releases \(/governor/news/news/562022/approved/news_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/news/562022/approved/news_archive.shtml)

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[Public Addresses \(/governor/news/addresses\)](/governor/news/addresses)

[Executive Orders \(/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo_archive.html\)](/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo_archive.html)

[Administrative Orders \(/governor/news/ao/approved/ao_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/ao/approved/ao_archive.shtml)

[Direct Appointments \(/governor/news/appointments\)](/governor/news/appointments)

[Advice and Consent Appointments \(/governor/news/acappointments\)](/governor/news/acappointments)

[Statements on Legislation](#)

[\(/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml)

[Administration Reports \(/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml)

[Transition Reports \(/governor/news/reports/approved/reports_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/reports/approved/reports_archive.shtml)

[Press Kits \(/governor/news/press\)](/governor/news/press)

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