



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kevin Thomas

## Senator Kevin Thomas And Senate Majority Advance Legislation to Reduce Disparities in Health Care for Underserved Communities

KEVIN THOMAS February 1, 2021

| ISSUE: [HEALTH CARE](#), [HEALTH EQUITY](#), [EQUITY](#), [UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES](#)



(Albany, NY) - **Senator Kevin Thomas** and the Senate Democratic Majority advanced legislation to promote equity in health care for underserved communities. This package will enact cultural education training for medical professionals, establish programs to recognize healthcare disparities, examine environmental effects of urban settings on public health, review changes in hospital services, and encourage equity in the addiction treatment services. These bills will also enact an evaluation of ethnic disparities in infant mortality and

breastfeeding to enhance the quality of healthcare services in New York and provide the necessary protections, and support these underserved communities need.

“The pandemic has highlighted healthcare disparities that have long existed across New York State. This legislation was created in partnership with advocates and healthcare workers to identify steps we can take to make sure all New Yorkers are receiving the best possible care,” Senator Kevin Thomas said. “Every New Yorker deserves access to quality healthcare, and these are important steps to address the serious disparities faced by underserved communities. I commend my colleagues for passing this important package, and I thank Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Chair of the Senate Health Committee, Senator Gustavo Rivera, for their leadership.”

The legislation passed by the Senate Majority, include:

- **Cultural Education for Medical Professionals:** This bill S.1352 Sponsored by Senator Jose M. Serrano will require healthcare professionals to complete Continuing Medical Education courses in cultural awareness and competence training.
- **Collaboration Programs to Address Healthcare Disparities:** This bill S.1374 sponsored by Senator James Sanders Jr. will authorize programs to work with hospitals, home care agencies and physicians to target health disparities thus improving health outcomes for under-served persons and reducing health care costs within the State.
- **Interagency Taskforce on Health Literacy:** This bill S.1407 sponsored by Senator Parker will establish an interagency task force on health literacy to develop recommendations to improve access to available health services, identify barriers that prevent residents from being able to access available health services, and identify and educate groups at risk for low health literacy.

- **Health Equity Assessment For Certificate of Need Applications:** This bill S.1451 sponsored by Senator Gustavo Rivera, will require a health equity assessment to be filed with an application for construction or change to a hospital or health related service, allowing consideration on how the project will impact medically underserved groups.
- **Minority Coordinating Council on Asthmatic Affairs:** This bill S.410A sponsored by Senator Alessandra Biaggi, establishes a minority coordinating council of asthmatic affairs to assess the asthma risk factors for minority citizens in NY, identify existing barriers to quality asthma treatment and care among minorities, develop action steps for addressing care issues, and launch a state-wide asthma awareness campaign. This legislation was written in response to the death of Lydia Soto, a child from the South Bronx who passed away due to complications with asthma.
- **Study of Asthma in Cities:** This bill S.646A sponsored by Senator James Sanders Jr., directs the New York State Department of Health to conduct a study on the incidences of asthma in cities having a population of more than ninety thousand.
- **Addiction Treatment Equity:** This bill S.679A sponsored by Senator Pete Harckham, establishes the Council for Treatment Equity within the Office of Addiction Services and Supports to address substance use disorder treatment disparities among vulnerable populations across the state
- **Study of Ethnic Disparities in Infant Mortality:** This bill S.879 sponsored by Senator Brian Benjamin requires the Department of Health of the state of New York to conduct a study of the effects of racial and ethnic disparities on infant mortality and prepare and submit a report.
- **Study of Ethnic Disparities in Breastfeeding:** This bill S.1296 sponsored by Senator Brian Benjamin requires the Department of Health of the state of New York to conduct a review of the effects of racial and ethnic disparities on breastfeeding rates and prepare and submit a report.

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RELATED LEGISLATION

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## 2021-S1352

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- Introduced
  
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
  
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
  
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
  
- Delivered to Governor
  
- Signed By Governor
  
- 

Requires cultural awareness and competence training for medical professionals

January 11, 2021

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by [Jose M. Serrano](#)

Do you support this bill?

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## 2021-S1374

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
- 

[Relates to collaborative models for addressing health care disparities](#)

January 11, 2021

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by [James Sanders Jr.](#)

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Do you support this bill?

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## 2021-S1407

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
- 

Establishes the interagency task force on health literacy

January 11, 2021

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by **Kevin S. Parker**

Do you support this bill?

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## 2021-S1451

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
- 

Relates to requiring a health equity assessment to be filed with an application for construction or change to a hospital or health related service

January 06, 2021

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by **Gustavo Rivera**

Do you support this bill?

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## 2021-S679A

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
- 

Establishes the council for treatment equity within the office of addiction services and supports

January 04, 2021

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by **Pete Harckham**

Do you support this bill?



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## 2021-S1296

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
- 

Requires the department of health of the state of New York to conduct a review of the effects of racial and ethnic disparities on breastfeeding rates and prepare and submit a report

January 11, 2021

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by **Brian Benjamin**

Do you support this bill?

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