

CHAPTER 21

AN ACT establishing the "New Jersey Veterans' Hospital Task Force."

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. There is established the "New Jersey Veterans' Hospital Task Force." The purpose of the task force shall be to study and evaluate, and develop recommendations relating to, the construction and operation of a veterans' health care facility in southern New Jersey.

2. a. The task force shall be comprised of 18 members as follows:

(1) the Adjutant General of the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs and the Commissioner of Health and Senior Services, or their designees, who shall serve *ex officio*;

(2) two members of the Senate to be appointed by the President of the Senate, who shall be members of different political parties; and two members of the General Assembly to be appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly, who shall be members of different political parties;

(3) twelve public members, to be appointed as follows:

(a) two members appointed by the Governor, upon the recommendation of the New Jersey Business and Industry Association, who shall be veterans and active participants in the business community in southern New Jersey;

(b) eight members appointed by the Governor, who shall include prominent veteran leaders from across the State; and

(c) two members appointed by the Governor who shall be subject matter experts from the New Jersey Hospital Association and veterans' healthcare services from the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs.

b. The legislative and public members of the task force shall be appointed no later than the 60th day after the effective date of this act. Vacancies in the membership of the task force shall be filled in the same manner provided for the original appointments.

c. The task force shall organize as soon as practicable following the appointment of its members and shall elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson from among the members of the task force. The task force shall appoint a secretary who need not be a member of the task force.

d. The public members shall serve without compensation, but shall be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties and within the limits of funds available to the task force.

e. The task force shall be entitled to call to its assistance and avail itself of the services of the employees of any State, county or municipal department, board, bureau, commission or agency as it may require and as may be available to it for its purposes.

f. The task force may meet and hold hearings at the places it designates during the sessions or recesses of the Legislature.

g. The Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs and the Department of Health and Senior Services shall provide staff support to the task force.

3. It shall be the duty of the task force to:

a. estimate the capital, operational and administrative expenses associated with establishing a new veterans' health care facility in southern New Jersey, or contracting with an existing health care facility to provide medical services to veterans;

b. obtain and review statistical data on the number of veterans residing in Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Ocean and Salem counties and the

number of veterans receiving medical services at hospitals within those counties in the past five years in order to determine a central location for a veterans' health care facility;

c. determine the size and staffing levels necessary for a veterans' health care facility to provide a full range of primary care and medical and surgical subspecialty care to eligible veterans;

d. review various methods of financing a veterans' health care facility through public, private and public-private partnership financing systems; and

e. investigate opportunities for the State to enter into collaborative agreements with the federal government to ensure the most efficient use of funds and resources related to the operation of a veterans' health care facility.

4. The task force shall report to the Governor and the Legislature, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), no later than 12 months after its initial meeting, on its findings and recommendations regarding strategies for the construction and operation of a veterans' health care facility in southern New Jersey.

5. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire upon the issuance of the task force report.

Approved February 3, 2011.