

House Bill 459

By: Representatives Carter of the 93rd, Schofield of the 63rd, Bennett of the 94th, Hugley of the 141st, Lim of the 98th, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 1 of Title 31 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
2 general provisions regarding health, so as to authorize the Department of Public Health to
3 implement a program to increase public awareness of cardiovascular health and
4 cardiovascular disease; to provide for partnerships and educational materials; to provide for
5 an annual report; to provide for related matters; to provide for a short title; to provide for
6 legislative findings and declarations; to provide for an effective date; to repeal conflicting
7 laws; and for other purposes.

8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

9 **SECTION 1.**

10 This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Heart Health for All Act."

11 **SECTION 2.**

12 The General Assembly finds and declares that:

13 (1) Cardiovascular disease, which includes ischemic heart disease, stroke, congestive heart
14 failure, hypertension, and atherosclerosis, is the leading cause of death in Georgia,
15 impacting residents of all ages, races, and genders;

H. B. 459

- 16 (2) Black and Hispanic women in Georgia experience disproportionate rates of
17 cardiovascular disease and cardiovascular morbidity and mortality;
- 18 (3) The leading causes of pregnancy related deaths were due to cardiovascular conditions,
19 and such deaths were largely preventable;
- 20 (4) Cardiovascular disease, heart attacks, and negative outcomes from heart attacks, are
21 increasing in younger generations, particularly Generation Z and millennials;
- 22 (5) COVID-19 has been associated with many cardiac complications, including cardiac
23 injury, ischemic heart disease, and heart failure, and the pandemic amplified risks and
24 worsened outcomes for individuals with cardiovascular disease; and
- 25 (6) Therefore, it is in the best interest of the residents of this state to establish a program
26 focused on raising public awareness of the importance of cardiovascular health and risk
27 factors, prevention, and treatment of cardiovascular disease.

28 SECTION 3.

29 Chapter 1 of Title 31 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to general
30 provisions regarding health, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

31 "31-1-26.

32 (a) The department shall:

33 (1) Develop and implement culturally relevant public awareness campaigns state wide
34 focused on cardiovascular health and the risk factors, prevention, and treatment of
35 cardiovascular disease. Such campaigns shall target all ages, races, and genders but shall
36 prioritize high-risk groups such as younger populations, Black and Hispanic
37 communities, and women;

38 (2) Partner with elementary and secondary schools, technical schools, colleges and
39 universities, and local organizations to educate the youth of this state about
40 cardiovascular health and cardiovascular disease, including recognizing the symptoms
41 of heart attacks and strokes; and

42 (3) Develop and distribute educational materials regarding cardiovascular health and
43 cardiovascular disease through community centers, healthcare providers, and digital
44 platforms to maximize outreach.

45 (b) The department shall support efforts to:

46 (1) Increase and improve research on the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of
47 cardiovascular disease, focusing on maternal health and minority populations; and

48 (2) Assist community health centers in offering free, discounted, or low-cost
49 cardiovascular screenings and preventive services.

50 (c) In implementing the provisions under subsection (b) of this Code section, the
51 department shall give priority to areas with limited healthcare access and higher
52 cardiovascular disease mortality rates as determined by the department.

53 (d) No later than June 30, 2026, and annually thereafter, the department shall prepare and
54 submit a detailed written report on the implementation and effectiveness of the provisions
55 of this Code section to the Governor and the General Assembly and shall publish such
56 report on its public website. Such report shall include:

57 (1) The effectiveness of the public awareness campaigns, partnerships with schools, and
58 education materials;

59 (2) The number and demographics of individuals served through cardiovascular
60 screenings and preventive services;

61 (3) Data illustrating the progress in reducing cardiovascular disease mortality rates across
62 all demographics served; and

63 (4) Any recommendations to improve awareness, prevention, and outcomes of
64 cardiovascular disease."

65 **SECTION 4.**

66 This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law
67 without such approval.

68

SECTION 5.

69 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.