

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2001**

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**SENATE BILL 391**

Short Title: Eliminate Disparities in Health Care.

(Public)

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Sponsors: Senators Forrester, Lucas; and Carpenter.

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Referred to: Children & Human Resources.

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March 12, 2001

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1  
2 AN ACT TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN  
3 SERVICES TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON WAYS TO ELIMINATE  
4 DISPARITIES IN HEALTH CARE.

5       Whereas, although indicators have shown that our nation's health has greatly  
6 improved, this good news does not apply to all Americans; and

7       Whereas, elderly women constitute most of the new cases and deaths from  
8 breast cancer, elderly minority women bear the largest brunt of the disease; and

9       Whereas, elderly African-American women are less likely to have had a  
10 mammogram than their white peers, despite Medicaid reimbursement for the service;  
11 and

12       Whereas, Hispanic women are also less likely to be screened for breast cancer  
13 than white women; and

14       Whereas, coronary heart disease is the leading cause of death for  
15 African-Americans in the United States and in spite of their mortality and morbidity for  
16 cardiovascular disease, African-Americans and Hispanics are less likely to undergo  
17 treatment for their conditions; and

18       Whereas, diabetes kills African-Americans at more than three times the rate  
19 for whites. It kills American Indians/Alaskan natives at more than twice the rate and  
20 Hispanics at more than one and one-half times the rate for whites; and

21       Whereas, in 1996, influenza and pneumonia were the fifth leading causes of  
22 death among persons 65 years of age and older. Among the Medicare population,  
23 non-Hispanic whites were more likely to report receipt of influenza and pneumococcal  
24 vaccines than Hispanics and non-Hispanic African-Americans; and

25       Whereas, the low-income population with dual Medicare and Medicaid  
26 coverage is particularly vulnerable to greater health disparities in contrast to other  
27 Medicare beneficiaries; Now, therefore,

28 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

1           **SECTION 1.** The Department of Health and Human Services shall study  
2 disparities among ethnic and racial minorities in the health care system and shall make  
3 recommendations on ways to eliminate disparities in and barriers to health care for  
4 ethnic and racial minorities. The Department shall make its report to the 2001 General  
5 Assembly, 2002 Regular Session, upon its convening. The Department shall provide a  
6 copy of the report to the cochairs of the Health Care Oversight Committee.

7           **SECTION 2.** This act is effective when it becomes law.