

Committee Substitute for
Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 352

An act relating to health care; establishing the Women and Heart Disease Task Force; providing for membership; specifying responsibilities; requiring a report; providing for future repeal; providing an appropriation; providing an effective date.

WHEREAS, the Legislature finds that heart disease is the leading cause of death among American women and that women fare worse after heart attacks than men, and

WHEREAS, the Legislature finds that women are almost 50 percent more likely than men to die from their heart attacks and, even when age and other medical differences are considered, women are still 13 percent more likely than men to die from their heart attacks, and

WHEREAS, the Legislature finds that women who suffer a first heart attack are at more than 70 percent greater risk of death or readmission to a hospital than men and that more women than men die from heart attacks within the first year after their first heart attack and more women than men will suffer a heart attack within 4 years after their first heart attack, and

WHEREAS, the Legislature finds that it can be harder to diagnose heart disease in women and that women usually have subtler symptoms of heart attack than men, which may contribute to the fact that women typically receive medical treatment for heart attacks later than men, and

WHEREAS, through the establishment of a state task force on women and heart disease, the Legislature intends to decrease the number of deaths due to heart disease by increasing public awareness of heart disease in women, by increasing, through public education, the percentage of women who seek examinations by physicians and obtain preventive care with regard to heart disease, and by increasing, through private, state, and federal dollars, research and coordination at Florida institutions that are studying the causes, methods of prevention, and treatment of heart disease in women, NOW, THEREFORE,

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Women and Heart Disease Task Force.—

(1) There is created within the Department of Health the Women and Heart Disease Task Force, to identify where public awareness, public education, research, and coordination regarding women and heart disease are lacking, to prepare recommendations to establish research on the reasons women suffer more severe first heart attacks than men and the reasons women die more often from heart attacks, and to increase the public's awareness of the importance of identifying the symptoms of, and treating, heart disease in women.

(2) The task force is composed of the Secretary of Health or a designee, the Executive Director of the Agency for Health Care Administration or a designee, the Insurance Commissioner or a designee, and 28 members to be appointed by July 15, 2000, as follows:

(a) The Governor shall appoint one representative from the Florida State Medical Association, one representative from the Black Nurses Association, one representative from the Association for Black Women Physicians, one representative of the University of Miami School of Medicine, one female family physician from the Florida Academy of Family Physicians, one female representative of the public who is a consumer advocate and who has been diagnosed with heart disease, one representative of the Florida Medical Association, one representative of the Florida Chapter College of Cardiology, one representative of the College of Emergency Physicians, one representative of a business that has more than 300 employees, one representative of a family practice teaching hospital, and one representative of a statutory teaching hospital.

(b) The President of the Senate shall appoint one representative of the University of Florida College of Medicine, one representative of the American Heart Association, one female representative of the public who is a consumer advocate and who has been diagnosed with heart disease, one representative of the NOVA Southeastern University of Osteopathic Medicine, one representative of the Florida Osteopathic Medical Association, one representative of the Florida Nurses Association, one representative of the Florida Dietetic Association, and one representative of a health maintenance organization.

(c) The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint one representative of the American Association of Critical Care Nurses, one representative of the Mayo Clinic, one representative of the University of South Florida College of Medicine, one representative of the Florida Society of Internal Medicine, one representative of the public who is a consumer advocate, one representative of the Florida Affiliate of the American Heart Association, one representative of the Biotechnology Industry Organization, and one representative of the insurance industry.

At least one of the persons appointed by each appointing entity shall be a member of an ethnic or racial minority. At least one-half of the members appointed by each appointing entity shall be women.

(3) The task force shall exist for 2 years and shall meet as often as necessary to carry out its duties and responsibilities. Within existing resources, the Department of Health shall provide support services to the task force.

(4) The members of the task force shall serve without compensation but shall be reimbursed for per diem and travel expenses by the Department of Health in accordance with the provisions of section 112.061, Florida Statutes, while performing their duties.

(5) The task force may obtain information and assistance from any state agency. All state agencies must give the task force all relevant information and reasonable assistance on matters related to heart disease.

(6) The task force shall collect research and information on heart disease in women and shall prepare recommendations and proposed legislation for reducing the incidence and the number of women's deaths related to heart disease in this state, to be included in a report submitted to the Governor and the Legislature by January 15, 2002. The task force shall also review and report on:

(a) The Florida Insurance Code as it relates to coverage for women's heart disease screening and treatment options. The task force shall include in its report recommended changes to the Florida Insurance Code, including specific statutory language, if the task force determines such changes are necessary to ensure that policyholders have coverage for appropriate and necessary heart disease prevention, screening, and treatment. If any legislative changes are recommended that would mandate a health coverage or the offering of a health coverage, the task force must assess the impact of the proposal as specified in s. 624.215, Florida Statutes.

(b) Approaches that may be used by state and local governments to increase public awareness of the risks of heart disease in women.

(c) Approaches to improving coordination among agencies and institutions involved in research on and treatment of heart disease in women.

(d) National trends with regard to women and heart disease, as well as how these trends compare to trends in Florida.

(7) The task force's recommendations shall include:

(a) A plan for reducing the number of deaths related to heart disease in this state, including:

1. Specific strategies for reducing the mortality rate of women with heart disease and an analysis of the extent to which these strategies differ from such strategies for men.

2. A list of health conditions that may cause or contribute to heart disease in women and the best methods by which to identify, control, and prevent these conditions from developing into heart disease.

3. The best methods for ensuring an increase in the percentage of women in this state who receive the tests designed to determine the risk of heart disease and to identify related conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, and high blood levels of cholesterol.

4. The best methods for ensuring an increase in the percentage of women in this state who seek examinations from physicians.

(b) A plan for increasing research and appropriate funding at Florida institutions studying heart disease in women.

(c) Recommendations for the development of practice guidelines for addressing heart disease in women.

(d) A program to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the task force's recommendations.

(8) Through funding appropriated to the Department of Health, the Women and Heart Disease Task Force shall develop and implement an educational program, to include the distribution of summaries, informing the public of the risk of heart disease specific to women and the strategies to follow for prevention, early detection, and treatment of heart disease.

(9) This section is repealed effective July 1, 2002.

Section 2. There is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of Health the sum of \$100,000 for fiscal year 2000-2001 and \$100,000 for fiscal year 2001-2002, to be used to produce or purchase and to distribute summaries in English, Spanish, and Creole which inform women patients about their risk of heart disease and about treatment alternatives for heart disease, and to develop and implement an educational program that includes the distribution of information specific to women and heart disease.

Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2000.

Approved by the Governor June 5, 2000.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 5, 2000.