



New York State Public Health Association (NYSPHA)

June 22, 2023

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
New York State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

RE: NYSPHA Recommends the Governor sign A5960/S8320 (Solages/Brisport) to establish a task force to identify evidence-based and evidence-informed solutions to reduce children's exposure to adverse childhood experiences.

Dear Governor Hochul,

The New York State Public Health Association (NYSPHA) is pleased to provide our recommendations to you on these bills, which have passed both houses of the legislature. NYSPHA is the New York affiliate of the American Public Health Association (APHA) and serves as the statewide organization for members from all disciplines across the spectrum of public health professionals, organizations, academia, and students pursuing careers in public health. Our mission is to improve the public's health through advocacy, education, networking, and professional development.

NYSPHA Recommends the Governor sign A5960/S8320 (Solages/Brisport) to establish a task force to identify evidence-based and evidence-informed solutions to reduce children's exposure to adverse childhood experiences. NYSPHA strongly believes that establishing a task force to identify evidence-based solutions to reduce Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) is essential to improving the health of all New Yorkers, especially for those at increased risk. ACEs are traumatic events that can affect children aged 0 to 17 years and include abuse, violence and neglect and can have life-long consequences for children including adverse health problems, mental illness, substance misuse, and have a negative impact on education, employment and earning opportunities. Children who are in families that exhibit a high stress environment may have difficulty forming relationships, making decisions, coping with depression, concentrating, and learning in school and can negatively affect brain development, stress responses and immune function. Racial and ethnic minority groups as well as women are more likely affected by ACEs.

In order to mitigate the impact of ACEs, it is imperative to understand the problem, the occurrence of ACEs in different groups, which of those groups are at greatest risk, and the socio-demographic determinants of health and well-being associated with ACEs. Additionally, it is vital to continue understanding the types of ACEs, the long-lasting effects ACEs have on adolescents and adults, and how they affect population health. Knowledge of this information will lead to building a state-level surveillance infrastructure that supports the analysis and implementation of primary prevention strategies. Identifying evidence-based and evidence and trauma-informed solutions are critical to

reducing children's exposure to ACEs and to creating policy and practices that will impact and protect New Yorkers.

Establishing a task force involving different stakeholders across the State that shall submit conclusions and recommendations to the governor's team will facilitate identification of timely and targeted solutions to prevent ACEs and reduction and potential elimination of racial and ethnic disparities in the occurrence of ACEs.

It should be noted that this legislation was also passed in the 2021-2022 legislative session (A4908) and the Governor vetoed it based on cost. The cost of the taskforce called for in this legislation can certainly be absorbed by the operating budgets of the department to health, OCFS, DOE, and DCJS. In her veto message, the Governor acknowledged the importance of the issue and directed the involved state agencies to review and incorporate the goals of the legislation in their work. It is not clear if that happened. If the bill is vetoed again on the same grounds, the Governor should specifically direct the agencies to issue a joint statement of what their current activities are with respect to ACEs and how they are working to address to goals of the legislation. Everyone acknowledges that ACEs is a significant public health issue. This legislation is an opportunity to address ACEs in a coordinated and comprehensive way. It is an opportunity that should not be missed.

NYSPHA's Recommendation.

We respectfully recommend that the Governor to sign A4908/S8320 relating to the establishment of a taskforce to identify evidence-based and evidence-informed solutions to reduce children's exposure to adverse childhood experiences; that will engage different stakeholders and identify social determinants of health and recommend solutions to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities linked to the occurrence of ACEs. Sincerely,



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