A bill to be entitled
An act relating to health disparities; amending s. 381.735, F.S.; specifying that efforts of the Office of Minority Health and Health Equity to improve access to and delivery of health services to racial and ethnic minority populations include efforts to eliminate racial disparities in vaccination rates in this state; providing an effective date.

WHEREAS, it is reported that nationally, between January 2020 and July 2021, an estimated 37.1 million doses of recommended vaccines were not administered to eligible adolescents and adults, and

WHEREAS, racial and ethnic minority populations have consistently lower vaccination rates than white populations, reportedly due to less awareness of vaccines and lack of information on when they should receive vaccines, and

WHEREAS, disparities in access and awareness also vary by vaccine type, with 28 percent of African-American adults in this state reported as having received a pneumococcal vaccine in 2019, compared to 42.1 percent of white adults, and another survey finding that human papillomavirus (HPV) and HPV vaccine awareness was significantly higher in surveyed white participants than in racial and ethnic minority participants, and

WHEREAS, as of July 2022, COVID-19 vaccination rates for African-American individuals were 18 percentage points below those for white individuals in this state, and

WHEREAS, providing targeted education and awareness of
routine adult vaccinations among racial and ethnic minority populations in this state through evidence-based strategies can increase uptake in these communities and improve vaccine coverage parity between them, NOW, THEREFORE,

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

Section 1. Paragraph (b) of subsection (2) of section 381.735, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

381.735 Office of Minority Health and Health Equity.—

(2) The office shall coordinate with agencies, organizations, and providers across this state to do all of the following:

(b) Develop mechanisms that support better information dissemination and education about health disparities which lead to improved access to and delivery of health care services to racial and ethnic minority populations in this state. Such mechanisms include, but are not limited to, those that support efforts to eliminate racial disparities in vaccination rates in this state through improved information dissemination and education on the importance of vaccinations and the availability of such vaccines.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2023.