

SENATE, No. 787

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 214th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2010 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator FRED H. MADDEN, JR.

District 4 (Camden and Gloucester)

Senator PAUL A. SARLO

District 36 (Bergen, Essex and Passaic)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senators S.Kean and A.R.Bucco

SYNOPSIS

Establishes "New Jersey Fire and EMS Crisis Intervention Services" telephone hotline.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel



1 AN ACT establishing a toll-free "Fire and EMS Crisis Intervention
2 Services" telephone hotline and supplementing chapter 27D of
3 Title 52 of the Revised Statutes.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:

7
8 1. As used in this act:

9 "Division" means the Division of Fire Safety in the Department
10 of Community Affairs; and

11 "University" means the University of Medicine and Dentistry of
12 New Jersey/University Behavioral Health Care.

13

14 2. a. The division, in conjunction with the university, shall
15 establish and maintain, on a 24-hour daily basis, a toll-free
16 information "New Jersey Fire and EMS Crisis Intervention
17 Services" telephone hotline. The hotline shall receive and respond
18 to calls from fire and emergency service personnel who have been
19 involved in any event or incident which has produced personal or
20 job-related depression, anxiety, stress or other psychological or
21 emotional tension, trauma or disorder for the fire or emergency
22 service personnel. The operators of the hotline shall seek to
23 identify those callers who should be referred to further debriefing
24 and counseling services, and to provide such referrals.

25 b. The operators of the hotline shall be trained by the division
26 and the university, and, to the greatest extent possible, shall be
27 persons who by experience or education are: (1) familiar with post
28 trauma disorders and the emotional and psychological tensions,
29 depressions and anxieties unique to fire and emergency service
30 personnel; or (2) trained to provide counseling services involving
31 marriage and family life, substance abuse, personal stress
32 management and other emotional or psychological disorders or
33 conditions which may be likely to adversely affect the personal and
34 professional well-being of New Jersey's fire and emergency service
35 personnel.

36 c. To ensure the integrity of the telephone hotline and to
37 encourage fire and emergency service personnel to utilize it, the
38 division and the university shall provide for the confidentiality of
39 the names of the fire and emergency services personnel calling, the
40 information discussed by a caller and operator, and any referrals for
41 further debriefing or counseling; provided, however, the division,
42 after consultation with the university, may, by rule and regulation,
43 establish guidelines providing for the tracking of any fire or
44 emergency services caller who exhibits a severe emotional or
45 psychological disorder or condition which the operator handling the
46 call reasonably believes might result in harm to that caller or others.

47

48 3. The division, after consultation with the university, shall

1 prepare a list of appropriately licensed or certified psychiatrists,
2 psychologists and social workers; appropriately trained and
3 qualified counselors; and experienced former fire and emergency
4 services personnel who are willing to accept referrals and
5 participate in the debriefing and counseling afforded fire and
6 emergency service personnel under this act.

7
8 4. In establishing the hotline authorized under the provisions of
9 section 2 of this act, the division and university shall consult with a
10 representative from the New Jersey Career Fire Chiefs Association;
11 Firefighters Mutual Benevolent Association; Professional
12 Firefighters Association of New Jersey; New Jersey Hospital
13 Association; New Jersey Association of Paramedic Programs; New
14 Jersey State First Aid Council; and New Jersey State Fire Chiefs
15 Association, and any other exclusive bargaining representative for a
16 New Jersey fire department or force, or emergency services agency
17 or provider; and such others as the division may deem appropriate.

18
19 5. This act shall take effect on the first day of the fifth month
20 following enactment, but the Division of Fire Safety in the
21 Department of Community Affairs may take such anticipatory
22 administrative action in advance as shall be necessary for the
23 implementation of the act.

24
25
26 STATEMENT

27
28 This bill directs the Division of Fire Safety in the Department of
29 Community Affairs, in conjunction with the University of Medicine
30 and Dentistry of New Jersey/University Behavioral Health Care, to
31 establish a 24-hour, toll-free "New Jersey Fire and EMS Crisis
32 Intervention Services" telephone hotline. The hotline will be
33 available to fire and emergency services personnel experiencing
34 personal or job-related depression, anxiety, stress, or other
35 psychological or emotional tension, trauma, pressure, or disorder.

36 When necessary and appropriate, hotline operators would refer
37 callers to further debriefing and counseling services, and the
38 division, after consultation with the university, is to establish
39 guidelines for tracking any fire or emergency services caller
40 exhibiting such a severe emotional or psychological disorder or
41 condition that it may result in harm to the caller or others.

42 The division and the university are to train the hotline operators.
43 To the greatest extent possible, these operators are to be persons
44 familiar with post trauma disorders and the emotional and
45 psychological tensions, depressions, and anxieties unique to fire and
46 emergency service personnel, or trained professionals able to
47 provide counseling services involving marriage and family life,
48 substance abuse, personal stress management and other emotional

S787 MADDEN, SARLO

4

1 or psychological disorders or conditions that may adversely affect
2 the personal and professional well-being of New Jersey's fire and
3 emergency service personnel.

4 The bill also directs the division, after consultation with the
5 university, to prepare a list of licensed or certified psychiatrists,
6 psychologists, and social workers, qualified counselors, and
7 experienced former fire and emergency services personnel who are
8 willing to accept referrals and provide debriefing and counseling
9 services.