

[Second Reprint]

SENATE, No. 1928

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
214th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 13, 2010

Sponsored by:

Senator FRED H. MADDEN, JR.

District 4 (Camden and Gloucester)

Senator DIANE B. ALLEN

District 7 (Burlington and Camden)

Assemblyman HERB CONAWAY, JR.

District 7 (Burlington and Camden)

Assemblyman GORDON M. JOHNSON

District 37 (Bergen)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblyman Connors and Assemblywoman Wagner

SYNOPSIS

Establishes New Jersey Epilepsy Task Force.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As amended by the Senate on June 21, 2010.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/29/2010)

1 AN ACT establishing the New Jersey Epilepsy Task Force.

2

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

5

6 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

7 a. Epilepsy is the medical term used to describe a pattern of
8 recurring seizures where an individual has no way of controlling
9 bodily functions or unusual behavior;

10 b. About 2.7 million Americans have epilepsy, with 30% of
11 that population being children under the age of 18; one in 10 people
12 will have a seizure in their lifetime, and this year another 200,000
13 people in the U.S. will be diagnosed with epilepsy;

14 c. According to the Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey,
15 epilepsy is more common than cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis,
16 and Parkinson's disease combined;

17 d. Epilepsy can strike anyone at anytime, and in 70% of all
18 cases, no known cause exists; and although modern treatment
19 methods can achieve full or partial control of seizures in 85% of all
20 cases, some seizure disorders are resistant to current therapies;

21 e. According to the Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey,
22 epilepsy is prevalent among persons with other disabilities, such as
23 autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, and intellectual
24 disabilities; 40% of people who have both cerebral palsy and
25 intellectual disabilities, also have epilepsy;

26 f. There is a strong association between epilepsy and
27 depression. More than one of every three persons with epilepsy are
28 also affected by depression, and persons with a history of
29 depression are three to seven times more likely to develop epilepsy
30 than persons who do not have a history of depression;

31 g. The public often perceives epileptic seizures as signs of
32 intellectual disability, mental illness, and dangerous aggression.
33 Because of this public perception, there is a 30% unemployment
34 rate in adults with the disorder, who are physically able to work;
35 nationally, epilepsy results in an estimated annual cost of \$15.5
36 billion in medical costs and lost or reduced earnings and
37 production;

38 h. To improve the quality of life for those living with seizure
39 disorders, the Epilepsy Foundation of America recognizes the need
40 for more research to discover the causes of epilepsy, to improve
41 diagnostic strategies, and to develop new drugs; and

42 i. Therefore, it is in the public interest for the State to establish
43 an Epilepsy Task Force to enhance public and professional
44 awareness about this disorder.

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Senate SHH committee amendments adopted May 27, 2010.

²Senate floor amendments adopted June 21, 2010.

1 2. a. There is established the New Jersey Epilepsy Task Force
2 in the Department of Health and Senior Services.

3 The purpose of the task force shall be to:

4 (1) develop recommendations to educate the public and health
5 care professionals about screening, diagnosis, and treatment of
6 epilepsy and its complications; and

7 (2) develop recommendations to address psychosocial issues
8 faced by persons with epilepsy, such as, depression, stigmatization,
9 and discrimination.

10 b. The task force shall consist of '~~11~~ 13' members as
11 follows:

12 (1) the Commissioners of Health and Senior Services and
13 Human Services, or their designees, who shall serve ex officio; and

14 (2) '~~nine~~ 11' public members, who shall be appointed by the
15 Governor as follows: two neurologists licensed to practice medicine
16 in this State¹, one of whom specializes in pediatric neurology¹; one
17 '~~member~~ person¹ upon the recommendation of the Epilepsy
18 Foundation of New Jersey; two '~~members~~ persons¹ who represent
19 agencies that provide services to persons with epilepsy in this State;
20 'one school nurse¹; two '~~members~~ persons¹ who have epilepsy;
21 'one parent of a person who has epilepsy¹; ²~~and two members~~
22 one member² of the public with a demonstrated expertise in issues
23 relating to the work of the task force²; and one consultant
24 pharmacist. No public member of the task force shall be associated,
25 directly or indirectly, with any pharmaceutical manufacturer².

26 Vacancies in the membership of the task force shall be filled in
27 the same manner provided for the original appointments.

28 c. The task force shall organize within 120 days following the
29 appointment of a majority of its members and shall select a
30 chairperson and vice-chairperson from among the members. The
31 chairperson shall appoint a secretary who need not be a member of
32 the task force.

33 d. The public members shall serve without compensation, but
34 shall be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the
35 performance of their duties and within the limits of funds available
36 to the task force.

37 e. The task force shall be entitled to call to its assistance and
38 avail itself of the services of the employees of any State, county or
39 municipal department, board, bureau, commission or agency as it
40 may require and as may be available to it for its purposes.

41 f. The task force may meet and hold hearings as it deems
42 appropriate.

43 g. The Department of Health and Senior Services shall provide
44 staff support to the task force.

45

46 3. The task force shall report its findings and recommendations
47 to the Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of

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1 P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), along with any legislative bills that
2 it desires to recommend for adoption by the Legislature, no later
3 than 12 months after the initial meeting of the task force.

4

5 4. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire upon
6 the issuance of the task force report.