

SENATE, No. 1931

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 214th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 13, 2010

Sponsored by:

Senator LORETTA WEINBERG

District 37 (Bergen)

Senator DIANE B. ALLEN

District 7 (Burlington and Camden)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes New Jersey Aphasia Study Commission.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT establishing the New Jersey Aphasia Study Commission.

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. Aphasia is a disorder of the brain that occurs, most
8 commonly, after a stroke or traumatic brain injury and affects a
9 person's ability to communicate. A person with aphasia typically
10 has difficulty speaking and, sometimes, difficulty with reading,
11 writing, and understanding what other people are saying; however,
12 the condition does not affect a person's intellect;

13 b. Although the condition is most common among older
14 people, aphasia can be acquired by people of all ages following
15 severe head and brain trauma;

16 c. The type and severity of language dysfunction depends on
17 the precise location and extent of damaged brain tissue. Generally,
18 there are four types of aphasia: (1) expressive aphasia involves
19 difficulty in conveying thoughts through speech or writing; (2)
20 receptive aphasia involves difficulty understanding spoken or
21 written language; (3) anomia or amnesia aphasia, the least severe
22 form of aphasia, involves difficulty in using the correct names for
23 particular objects, people, places or events; and (4) global aphasia,
24 the most severe form of aphasia, involves loss of almost all
25 language function, both comprehensive and expression;

26 d. There is no one treatment proven to be effective for all types
27 of aphasia. Persons with aphasia usually experience improvement
28 over time, aided by speech therapy, rehabilitation services, and
29 counseling; however, many persons with aphasia are prone to
30 depression, hopelessness, and isolation, avoiding contact with
31 others in order to pass on social situations that may lead to mutual
32 frustration;

33 e. It is estimated that one million people in the United States
34 have aphasia, more than the number of people suffering from
35 Parkinson's disease, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, or
36 cerebral palsy; and

37 f. It is, therefore, in the public interest for the State to establish
38 a commission to study the prevalence and impact of aphasia on
39 residents of the State, and to review model support programs for
40 persons with aphasia and their families.

41

42 2. a. There is established the New Jersey Aphasia Study
43 Commission in the Department of Health and Senior Services.

44 The purpose of the commission shall be to:

45 (1) establish a mechanism in order to ascertain the prevalence of
46 aphasia in New Jersey, and the unmet needs of persons with aphasia
47 and those of their families;

1 (2) study model aphasia support programs, such as, the Kean
2 University Institute for Adults Living with Communication
3 Disabilities and the Adler Aphasia Center; and

4 (3) provide recommendations for additional support programs
5 and resources to meet the unmet needs of persons with aphasia and
6 their families.

7 b. The commission shall consist of 11 members as follows:

8 (1) the Commissioners of Health and Senior Services, Banking
9 and Insurance, and Human Services, or their designees, who shall
10 serve ex officio; and

11 (2) eight public members who shall be appointed as follows:
12 two members appointed by the Senate President, one of whom is a
13 person with aphasia and one of whom provides services to persons
14 with aphasia; two members appointed by the Speaker of the General
15 Assembly, one of whom is a person with aphasia and one of whom
16 provides services to persons with aphasia; and four members
17 appointed by the Governor, one of whom is a person with aphasia,
18 one of whom provides services to persons with aphasia, and two
19 members of the public with demonstrated expertise in issues
20 relating to the work of the commission.

21 Vacancies in the membership of the commission shall be filled in
22 the same manner provided for the original appointments.

23 c. The commission shall organize within 120 days following
24 the appointment of a majority of its members and shall select a
25 chairperson and vice-chairperson from among the members. The
26 chairperson shall appoint a secretary who need not be a member of
27 the commission.

28 d. The public members shall serve without compensation, but
29 shall be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the
30 performance of their duties and within the limits of funds available
31 to the commission.

32 e. The commission shall be entitled to call to its assistance and
33 avail itself of the services of the employees of any State, county or
34 municipal department, board, bureau, commission or agency as it
35 may require and as may be available to it for its purposes.

36 f. The commission may meet and hold hearings as it deems
37 appropriate.

38 g. The Department of Health and Senior Services shall provide
39 staff support to the commission.

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41 3. The commission shall report its findings and
42 recommendations to the Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant
43 to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), along with any
44 legislative bills that it desires to recommend for adoption by the
45 Legislature, no later than 12 months after the initial meeting of the
46 commission.

1 4. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire upon
2 the issuance of the commission report.

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STATEMENT

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7 This bill establishes the New Jersey Aphasia Study Commission
8 in the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS).

9 Specifically, the bill provides as follows:

10 • The purpose of the commission is to:

11 -- establish a mechanism in order to ascertain the prevalence of
12 aphasia in New Jersey, and the unmet needs of persons with aphasia
13 and those of their families;

14 -- study model aphasia support programs, such as, the Kean
15 University Institute for Adults Living with Communication
16 Disabilities and the Adler Aphasia Center; and

17 -- provide recommendations for additional support programs and
18 resources to meet the unmet needs of persons with aphasia and their
19 families.

20 • The commission is to consist of 11 members as follows:

21 -- the Commissioners of Health and Senior Services, Banking
22 and Insurance, and Human Services, or their designees, who shall
23 serve ex officio; and

24 -- eight public members who shall be appointed as follows: two
25 members appointed by the Senate President, one of whom is a
26 person with aphasia and one of whom provides services to persons
27 with aphasia; two members appointed by the Speaker of the General
28 Assembly, one of whom is a person with aphasia and one of whom
29 provides services to persons with aphasia; and four members
30 appointed by the Governor, one of whom is a person with aphasia,
31 one of whom provides services to persons with aphasia, and two
32 members of the public with demonstrated expertise in issues
33 relating to the work of the commission.

34 • The commission shall organize within 120 days following the
35 appointment of a majority of its members and shall select a
36 chairperson and vice-chairperson from among the members. The
37 chairperson shall appoint a secretary who need not be a member of
38 the commission.

39 • DHSS is to provide staff support to the commission.

40 • The commission is to report its findings and recommendations to
41 the Governor and the Legislature no later than 12 months after its
42 initial meeting.

43 • The bill expires upon the issuance of the commission report.