

[Second Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 5314

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 13, 2019

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SYNOPSIS

Requires DHS to study social isolation occurring in certain population groups.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee on November 14, 2019, with amendments.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/14/2020)

1 AN ACT concerning social isolation in certain population groups
2 ²[and supplementing Title 30 of the Revised Statutes]² .

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

6
7 1. a. Within ¹[180] 270¹ days after the effective date of this
8 act, ¹[and biennially thereafter,]¹ the Commissioner of Human
9 Services shall assess and report on the nature and frequency of
10 social isolation occurring in the State, and the resources that are
11 available to combat social isolation. ²[Each] The² assessment and
12 report shall focus on, but need not be limited to, an analysis of
13 social isolation affecting the following vulnerable populations:

14 (1) individuals who are 65 years of age or older;

15 (2) individuals with disabilities ¹, with the definition of the term
16 “individuals with disabilities” interpreted by the Commissioner of
17 Human Services in an expansive fashion to include as many
18 disabilities as is appropriate for the purposes of this act¹;

19 (3) individuals with mental illness; and

20 (4) other vulnerable populations, as deemed by the
21 commissioner to be appropriate ¹, including ²[.]² individuals who
22 serve or have served in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines or
23 Coast Guard of the United States, a Reserve component thereof, or
24 the National Guard of this State as defined in section 1 of P.L.1963,
25 c.109 (C.38A:1-1)¹.

26 b. In conducting ²the² social isolation ²[assessments]
27 assessment² pursuant to subsection a. of this section, the
28 commissioner shall:

29 (1) consult with appropriate professionals, organizations, and
30 agencies throughout the State that provide counseling, health care,
31 mental health care, support care, or other social or daily living
32 assistance ²[.]² to members of vulnerable populations;

33 (2) consult with members of vulnerable populations who are
34 currently seeking treatment or care for social isolation, and, to the
35 extent practicable, consult with the family members or caregivers of
36 such individuals;

37 (3) review available data and research materials on social
38 isolation, and consult with educational institutions and other
39 educational or public interest organizations in the State, which are
40 actively involved in the study or research of matters related to
41 social isolation; ¹[and]¹

42 (4) review the actions that have been undertaken, and the
43 policies that have been implemented, by other states and

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:

¹Assembly AHE committee amendments adopted May 20, 2019.

²Senate SHH committee amendments adopted November 14, 2019.

1 jurisdictions to combat social isolation occurring in their
2 communities¹; and

3 (5) consult with other State, county, and municipal departments
4 and agencies to gather information, data, and materials on social
5 isolation¹.

6 c. ²**[Each]** The² report prepared under this section shall
7 include:

8 (1) for each type of vulnerable population listed in subsection a.
9 of this section, an indication of the frequency of social isolation
10 occurring among members of that population, including the
11 approximate number and percentage of individuals in each
12 population who are experiencing social isolation, and the
13 approximate number and percentage of such individuals who are
14 susceptible to, but are not yet experiencing, social isolation;

15 (2) a description of the demographic and other characteristics
16 that are held in common by the members of vulnerable populations
17 who are experiencing, or are susceptible to, social isolation;

18 (3) a description of the symptoms and other indicators of social
19 isolation;

20 (4) a description of the circumstantial and situational factors
21 that contribute to social isolation;

22 (5) an indication of the State resources that are available to help
23 individuals recognize, address, and recover from ²**[,]**² social
24 isolation, including an indication of the organizations and other
25 entities throughout the State that provide information, counseling,
26 or other assistance to individuals who are experiencing, or are
27 susceptible to, social isolation, and, to the extent such information
28 is available, the number of individuals from each vulnerable
29 population group who have been assisted by such organizations or
30 other entities ²**[during the reporting period]**² ;

31 (6) an indication of the ways in which other states and
32 jurisdictions have addressed issues of social isolation occurring in
33 their communities;

34 (7) an indication of the ways in which the available State
35 resources for social isolation are lacking and could be improved;

36 (8) an analysis of trends that are evident from the data reported
37 in this area ²**[,]** including a description of any significant changes in
38 the reported data, which ²**[that** have occurred over time; and

39 (9) recommendations for legislative, executive, or other action
40 that can be taken to: (a) prevent or redress instances of social
41 isolation occurring in the State, particularly among vulnerable
42 populations; and (b) otherwise improve the accessibility and
43 effectiveness of available resources and supports for socially
44 isolated individuals.

45 d. ²**[Each]** The² report prepared pursuant to this section shall
46 be submitted to the Governor, and, pursuant to section 2 of
47 P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the Legislature; and shall

1 additionally be posted on the Internet website of the Department of
2 Human Services.

3 e. As used in this section ²]:

4 “Commissioner” means the Commissioner of Human Services.

5 “Social²” , “social² isolation” means aloneness or sequestration
6 that is not chosen or wanted; that stems from or results in the virtual
7 absence of interaction with others, beyond those interactions that
8 are required for the sequestered person to perform basic life
9 functions; and that has a negative or threatening effect on the
10 sequestered person.

11 ²“Vulnerable population” means individuals who are 65 years
12 of age or older, individuals with disabilities, individuals with
13 mental illness, and any other group of individuals who are deemed
14 by the commissioner to be inherently vulnerable to social isolation,
15 due to age, physical or mental incapacity or fragility, or other
16 distinguishing characteristics that are held in common by all, or the
17 majority of, the group’s members.]²

18

19 2. This act shall take effect immediately ²and shall expire upon
20 submission of the report required pursuant to this act² .