

ASSEMBLY HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 4174

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 14, 2020

The Assembly Higher Education Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 4174 with committee amendments.

The COVID-19 pandemic is causing a national mental health crisis. In order to help address this situation, this bill, as amended, provides that for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 academic years, institutions of higher education, at their discretion, may permit final-year students in graduate degree programs leading to a degree as a mental health care professional to graduate early or to be matched with a residency or clinical program early provided that:

- (1) the student has completed all required coursework; and
- (2) the institution appoints a staff member to mentor the student during participation in the residency or clinical program.

The bill defines a “mental health care professional” as a licensed psychiatrist, psychologist, professional counselor, clinical social worker, marriage and family therapist, or any other individual licensed or certified to provide or administer mental health care in the ordinary course of business or practice of a profession.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to specify that institutions of higher education, at their discretion, may permit final-year students in graduate degree programs leading to a degree as a mental health care professional to graduate early or to be matched with a residency or clinical program early provided that:

- (1) the student has completed all required coursework; and
- (2) the institution appoints a staff member to mentor the student during participation in the residency or clinical program.