

SENATE, No. 2175

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 16, 2020

Sponsored by:

Senator JOSEPH F. VITALE

District 19 (Middlesex)

Senator JOSEPH P. CRYAN

District 20 (Union)

SYNOPSIS

Requires certain licensed health care professionals and health care facilities to screen adolescents and young adults for symptoms of depression.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **AN ACT** concerning licensed health care professionals and health
2 care facilities and supplementing Title 26 of the Revised
3 Statutes.

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

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8 1. a. A pediatrician, family practice physician, other health
9 care professional licensed pursuant to Title 45 of the Revised
10 Statutes, or a health care facility that serves children and is licensed
11 pursuant to P.L.1971, c.136 (C.26:2H-1 et seq.), as appropriate,
12 shall screen each patient who is between the ages of 10 and 21 to
13 whom the pediatrician, family practice physician, licensed health
14 care professional, or facility provides health care services, for
15 symptoms of depression and other depressive disorders.

16 b. The Commissioner of Health shall develop standards for the
17 screening of patients pursuant to subsection a. of this section, in
18 accordance with the Guidelines for the Management of Adolescent
19 Depression in Primary Care developed by the American Academy
20 of Pediatrics.

21 The standards developed by the commissioner shall, at a
22 minimum, provide for the:

23 (1) evaluation, identification, assessment, and diagnosis of
24 patients at high risk for depression and other depressive disorders;

25 (2) education of, and advocacy for, families and patients about
26 depression and other depressive disorders and treatment options for
27 the management of such disorders;

28 (3) establishment of collaborative linkages between State, local,
29 and community-based mental health agencies, peer support and
30 advocacy groups, hospital-based mental health services, and
31 pediatricians, family practice physicians, other licensed health care
32 professionals, and health care facilities to ensure timely and
33 effective access to needed services; and

34 (4) development of a safety plan, including an emergency
35 communication mechanism for handling acute crises, to ensure that
36 safety measures are in place for patients during the period of initial
37 treatment when safety concerns are highest.

38
39 2. The Commissioner of Health shall adopt, pursuant to the
40 "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et
41 seq.), rules and regulations necessary for the implementation of this
42 act.

43
44 3. This act shall take effect on the first day of the sixth month
45 next following enactment.

STATEMENT

This bill requires a pediatrician, family practice physician, other health care professional licensed pursuant to Title 45 of the Revised Statutes, or a health care facility that serves children and is licensed pursuant to P.L.1971, c.136 (C.26:2H-1 et seq.), as appropriate, to screen each patient between the ages of 10 and 21 to whom the pediatrician, family practice physician, licensed health care professional, or facility provides health care services for symptoms of depression and other depressive disorders.

The Commissioner of Health would be required to develop standards for the screening of such patients in accordance with the Guidelines for the Management of Adolescent Depression in Primary Care developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The standards developed by the commissioner would, at a minimum, provide for the: evaluation, identification, assessment, and diagnosis of patients at high risk for depression and other depressive disorders; education of, and advocacy for, families and patients about depression and other depressive disorders and treatment options for the management of such disorders; establishment of collaborative linkages between State, local, and community-based mental health agencies, peer support and advocacy groups, hospital-based mental health services and pediatricians, family practice physicians, other licensed health care professionals, and health care facilities to ensure timely and effective access to needed services; and development of a safety plan, including an emergency communication mechanism for handling acute crises, to ensure that safety measures are in place for patients during the period of initial treatment when safety concerns are highest.

Major depression in adolescents and young adults is recognized as a serious psychiatric illness. Research shows that only 50 percent of adolescents with depression are diagnosed before they reach adulthood, and even when diagnosed by a health care professional, a large number of depressed adolescents are not treated appropriately.

The Guidelines for the Management of Adolescent Depression in Primary Care were developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics to assist health care professionals in the identification and management of depressed adolescents and young adults, and to develop a multi-faceted approach in providing treatment to those suffering from depression and other depressive disorders.

This bill would require pediatricians, family practice physicians, other licensed health care professionals, and health care facilities to screen adolescents and young adults for symptoms of depression and other depressive disorders in a manner consistent with the guidelines established by the American Academy of Pediatrics.