Sponsored by:
Senator ANTHONY M. BUCCO
District 25 (Morris and Somerset)
Senator VIN GOPAL
District 11 (Monmouth)

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Senator Madden

SYNOPSIS
Requires health care facilities to screen health care workers, first responders, and other frontline workers for symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder related to COVID-19 pandemic.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 7/22/2020)
AN ACT concerning post-traumatic stress disorder and
supplementing Title 26 of the Revised Statues.

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

1. a. Health care facilities licensed pursuant to P.L.1971, c.136
(C.26:2H-1 et seq.) shall establish procedures to screen health care
workers, first responders, and other frontline workers, upon intake
for inpatient or outpatient services, for the symptoms of post-
traumatic stress disorder related to the coronavirus disease 2019
(COVID-19) pandemic. Each facility shall implement measures to
avoid performing redundant screenings on a given health care
worker, first responder, or other frontline worker, both at the same
facility and at other facilities in the State, unless the individual
requests a subsequent screening or a subsequent screening appears
to be clinically appropriate. Health care workers, first responders,
and other frontline workers presenting at a facility for health care
services shall have the right to refuse to be screened for the
symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder related to the COVID-
19 pandemic. In the event a health care worker, first responder, or
other frontline worker screens positive for the symptoms of post-
traumatic stress disorder related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the
facility shall offer to assist the individual with referrals to
appropriate treatment resources and shall provide the individual
with a link to the informational resources published on the Internet
websites of the Department of Health and the Division of Mental
Health and Addiction Services in the Department of Human
Services pursuant to subsection c. of this section.

b. Health care facilities employing health care workers, first
responders, or other frontline workers who provided services in
response to the COVID-19 pandemic or who provided essential
services during the COVID-19 pandemic shall ensure that those
health care workers, first responders, and other frontline workers
are provided with information about the resources that are available
concerning to post-traumatic stress disorder related to the COVID-
19 pandemic, including, but not limited to, employee assistance
programs and a link to the informational resources published on the
Internet websites of the Department of Health and the Division of
Mental Health and Addiction Services in the Department of Human
Services pursuant to subsection c. of this section.

c. The Department of Health and the Division of Mental Health
and Addiction Services in the Department of Human Services shall:

(1) jointly develop a screening tool for post-traumatic stress
disorder related to the COVID-19 pandemic, along with guidance
concerning the use of the screening tool, for use by health care
facilities for the purposes of conducting screenings pursuant to
subsection a. of this section;
(2) publish on their respective Internet websites information and a list of available resources related to treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder, including links to appropriate third-party resource providers, for use by health care facilities in connection with subsections a. and b. of this section; and

(3) provide such other resources and implement such other programs and initiatives as each shall determine to be appropriate to meet the clinical needs of health care workers, first responders, and other frontline workers experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. This act shall take effect 60 days after the date of enactment.

STATEMENT

This bill requires health care facilities to establish procedures to screen health care workers, first responders, and other frontline workers, upon intake for inpatient or outpatient services, for the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) related to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Each facility is to implement measures to avoid performing redundant screenings on a given health care worker, first responder, or other frontline worker, both at that facility and at other facilities throughout the State, unless the individual requests a subsequent screening or a subsequent screening appears to be clinically appropriate. Health care workers, first responders, and other frontline workers will have the right to refuse to be screened for the symptoms of PTSD related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the event a health care worker, first responder, or other frontline worker screens positive for the symptoms of PTSD related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the facility will be required to offer to assist the individual with referrals to appropriate treatment resources and a link to informational resources that are required to published on the Internet websites of the Department of Health (DOH) and the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) in the Department of Human Services under the bill.

The DOH and DMHAS will be required to develop a PTSD screening tool, and guidance concerning the use of the screening tool, for use by health care facilities in complying with the requirements of the bill. In addition, the DOH and DMHAS are to provide other resources and implement other programs and initiatives as they deem appropriate to meet the clinical needs of health care workers, first responders, and other frontline workers experiencing PTSD related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The bill additionally requires health care facilities employing health care workers, first responders, or other frontline workers who provided services in response to the COVID-19 pandemic or who
provided essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that those health care workers and first responders are provided with information concerning available resources and services for PTSD related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including, but not limited to, employee assistance programs and a link to the informational resources the bill requires to be published on the Internet websites of the DOH and the DMHAS.