

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE TO

[First Reprint]
ASSEMBLY, No. 843

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: OCTOBER 31, 1996

Assembly Bill No. 843 (1R) of 1996 establishes a nine-member board in the Division of Consumer Affairs of the Department of Law and Public Safety for the professional licensing of alcohol and drug counselors. The board would establish professional standards and certify counselors who meet these standards. The bill's provisions would not apply to licensed health care professionals or members of the clergy practicing under the auspices of a church.

The bill requires the director of the Division of Consumer Affairs to establish license fees sufficient to cover the cost of its administration. The bill also appropriates \$95,000 to implement its provisions.

Information provided informally by the division projects that approximately 2,000 counselors would be licensed under the bill in the first three years, with 1,600 licensed in the first year and 200 in each of the next two years. Based on these numbers, the division informally estimates the cost of administering this bill at \$345,000 in the first year following enactment. This amount includes \$135,000 in salary and fringe benefit costs for an executive director and three clerical personnel; \$5,000 for materials and supplies; \$159,000 for services other than personal; \$29,000 for maintenance; and \$17,000 for equipment. After inflating salary costs by about 5 percent and reducing equipment costs, the division estimates the fiscal impact of this bill at \$370,000 and \$388,000 in the second and third years, respectively.

A licensing fee of approximately \$215 per counselor would be required in the first year to defray the board's administrative expenses. This fee might be reduced in subsequent years to approximately \$205 per counselor in view of the board's projected increase in licensees.

The Office of Legislative Services concurs with this estimate.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67.