

P.L. 1997, CHAPTER 68, *approved April 16, 1997*
Senate, No. 1540

1 **AN ACT** concerning State psychiatric facilities and supplementing Title
2 30 of the Revised Statutes.

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

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7 1. As used in this act:

8 "Clinical treatment staff" means a physician, psychiatrist,
9 psychologist, physical therapist or social worker licensed pursuant to
10 Title 45 of the Revised Statutes, an occupational, recreation, art or
11 music therapist or a substance abuse counselor.

12 "Nursing direct care staff" means a Human Services Assistant,
13 Human Services Technician or a nurse licensed pursuant to Title 45 of
14 the Revised Statutes.

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16 2. a. The Commissioner of Human Services shall designate staff
17 who are not employed at a State psychiatric facility listed in R.S.30:1-
18 7 to conduct unannounced site visits to randomly check staffing on
19 various shifts at a State psychiatric facility, at least three times during
20 a calendar year. During the site visit, the designated staff shall review:
21 the daily operation of the facility, including, the actual deployment of
22 clinical treatment staff and nursing direct care staff on various shifts
23 to determine whether the actual deployment of staff meets the
24 documented staffing plan of the facility; the system for reporting any
25 information concerning alleged patient abuse or professional
26 misconduct as provided for in P.L. , c. (C.)(now pending before
27 the Legislature as Senate Bill No. of 1996); the operation of
28 therapeutic programs or activities for patients; and any other aspect of
29 the facility which the commissioner deems appropriate.

30 b. The commissioner shall provide and implement, on an ongoing
31 basis, surveillance procedures designed to identify problems related
32 to patient care at a State psychiatric facility. These procedures shall
33 include, but not be limited to, the use of security cameras and the use
34 of persons to perform covert investigations of the daily operation of
35 the facility. Persons performing covert investigations shall assume
36 roles which do not suggest their actual function.

1 3. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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6 This bill requires the Commissioner of Human Services to designate
7 staff who are not employed at a State psychiatric facility listed in
8 R.S.30:1-7 to review the daily operation of the State psychiatric
9 facilities by conducting unannounced site visits to randomly check
10 staffing on the various shifts at a State psychiatric facility, at least
11 three times during a calendar year.

12 During the visit, the designated staff shall review:

13 C the actual deployment of clinical treatment staff and nursing direct
14 care staff on various shifts to determine whether the actual
15 deployment meets the documented staffing plan;

16 C the system for reporting any information concerning alleged patient
17 abuse or professional misconduct;

18 C the operation of therapeutic programs of activities for patients; and

19 C any other aspect of the facility which the commissioner deems
20 appropriate.

21 In addition, the bill requires the commissioner to provide and
22 implement surveillance procedures, including but not limited to, the
23 use of security cameras and the use of persons to perform covert
24 investigations of the daily operation of the facility. Persons
25 performing covert investigations shall assume roles which do not
26 suggest their actual functions.

27 This legislation is part of a package of bills which was
28 recommended in the Final Report of the Senate Task Force on
29 Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital, June 1996, and is designed to
30 improve the care provided in the State's psychiatric facilities. The task
31 force believes that the more frequent and intense monitoring of daily
32 operations, as provided for in this legislation, will provide enhanced
33 patient care and reduce the frequency of patient abuse and neglect.

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38 Requires Commissioner of Human Services to conduct unannounced
39 site visits and provide undercover surveillance at State psychiatric
40 facilities.