

SENATE, No. 1907

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED MARCH 20, 1997

By Senator KOSCO

1 AN ACT establishing regional diagnostic and treatment centers for
2 child abuse and neglect and making an appropriation.

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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. The Commissioner of Human Services shall establish four
8 regional diagnostic and treatment centers for child abuse and neglect
9 affiliated with medical teaching institutions in the State that meet the
10 standards adopted by the commissioner, in consultation with the
11 Governor's Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect. The regional
12 centers shall be located in the northern, north central, south central
13 and southern regions of the State. Each center shall have experience
14 in addressing the medical and mental health diagnostic and treatment
15 needs of abused and neglected children in the region in which it is
16 located.

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18 2. Each center shall demonstrate a multidisciplinary approach to
19 identifying and responding to child abuse and neglect. The center
20 staff shall include, at a minimum, a pediatrician, a consulting
21 psychiatrist, a psychologist and a social worker who are trained to
22 evaluate and treat children who have been abused or neglected and
23 their families. Each center shall establish a liaison with the district
24 office of the Division of Youth and Family Services in the Department
25 of Human Services and the prosecutor's office from the county in
26 which the child who is undergoing evaluation and treatment resides.
27 At least one member of the staff shall also have an appropriate
28 professional credential or significant training and experience in the
29 identification and treatment of substance abuse.

30 Each center shall develop an intake, referral and case tracking
31 process which assists the division and prosecutor's office in assuring
32 that child victims receive appropriate and timely diagnostic and
33 treatment services.

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35 3. The regional centers shall: evaluate and treat child abuse and
36 neglect; be resources for the region and develop additional resources
37 within the region; provide training and consultative services; and be

1 available for emergency phone consultation 24 hours a day. The
2 centers shall also be a source for research and training for additional
3 medical and mental health personnel dedicated to the identification and
4 treatment of child abuse and neglect.

5 The regional center may charge a sliding scale fee for services
6 provided under this act.

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8 4. Services provided by the center's staff shall include, but not be
9 limited to:

10 a. Providing psychological and medical evaluation and treatment
11 of the child, counseling for family members and substance abuse
12 assessment and mental health and substance abuse counseling for the
13 parents or guardians of the child;

14 b. Providing referral for appropriate social services and medical
15 care;

16 c. Providing testimony regarding alleged child abuse or neglect at
17 judicial proceedings;

18 d. Providing treatment recommendations for the child and mental
19 health and substance abuse treatment recommendations for his
20 family, and providing mental health and substance abuse treatment
21 recommendations for persons convicted of child abuse or neglect;

22 e. Receiving referrals from the Division of Youth and Family
23 Services and the county prosecutor's office and assisting them in any
24 investigation of child abuse or neglect;

25 f. Providing educational material and seminars on child abuse and
26 neglect and the services the center provides to children, parents,
27 teachers, law enforcement officials, the judiciary, attorneys and other
28 citizens.

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30 5. The regional center shall ensure the safety of a child undergoing
31 treatment while the child is at the regional center to the extent
32 permitted by law. The appropriate law enforcement officials and
33 protective services providers shall continue to ensure the safety of the
34 child to the extent permitted by law.

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36 6. Regional centers shall act as a resource in the establishment and
37 maintenance of county-based multidisciplinary teams which work in
38 conjunction with the county prosecutor and the Division of Youth and
39 Family Services in the investigation of child abuse and neglect in the
40 county in which the child who is undergoing evaluation and treatment
41 resides. The Commissioner of Human Services, in consultation with
42 the Governor's Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect, shall establish
43 standards for a county team. The county team shall consist of
44 representatives of the following disciplines: law enforcement; child
45 protective services; mental health; substance abuse identification and
46 treatment; and medicine, all of whom have been trained to recognize

1 child abuse and neglect. The county team shall provide: facilitation of
2 the investigation, management and disposition of cases of criminal
3 child abuse and neglect; referral services to the regional diagnostic
4 center; appropriate referrals to medical and social service agencies;
5 information regarding the identification and treatment of child abuse
6 and neglect; and appropriate follow-up care for abused children and
7 their families.

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9 7. There is established a 15 member Diagnostic and Treatment
10 Advisory Council to oversee the programs of the regional centers, help
11 facilitate communications among the centers, county teams, law
12 enforcement officials and the Division of Youth and Family Services,
13 develop standards of care for the treatment of child abuse, and help
14 coordinate any research it deems appropriate. The council shall
15 consist of: the Commissioners of the Departments of Human Services,
16 Health and Senior Services and Education, and the Attorney General,
17 or their designees; the Director of the Division of Youth and Family
18 Services; the directors of the four regional centers; a physician; a
19 social worker; a psychologist; a certified alcohol and drug abuse
20 counselor or other professional appropriately credentialed to identify
21 and treat substance abuse; an advocate for abused and neglected
22 children; and a person who has utilized the services of a center. The
23 Governor shall appoint the six public members of the council, who
24 shall serve as members for three years.

25 The advisory council shall report annually to the Governor and the
26 Legislature regarding the effectiveness of the regional centers and shall
27 make recommendations for improvements or changes.

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29 8. The Commissioner of Human Services shall adopt rules and
30 regulations pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act" P.L.1968,
31 c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.) necessary to effectuate the provisions of
32 this act.

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34 9. There is appropriated \$1.5 million from the General Fund to the
35 Department of Human Services to carry out the purposes of this act.

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37 10. This act shall take effect immediately.

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40 STATEMENT

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42 This bill establishes four regional diagnostic and treatment centers
43 for child abuse and neglect affiliated with medical centers in the State
44 that meet standards adopted by the Commissioner of Human Services,
45 in consultation with the Governor's Task Force on Child Abuse and
46 Neglect. Each center shall demonstrate a multidisciplinary approach

1 to identifying and responding to child abuse and neglect. The center's
2 staff shall include, at a minimum, a pediatrician, a consulting
3 psychiatrist, a psychologist and a social worker who are trained to
4 evaluate and treat children who have been abused and neglected and
5 their families. At least one member of the staff shall also have an
6 appropriate professional credential or significant training and
7 experience in the identification and treatment of substance abuse.

8 Each center shall establish a liaison with the district office of the
9 Division of Youth and Family Services in the Department of Human
10 Services and with the county prosecutor's office from the county in
11 which the child who is undergoing evaluation and treatment resides.

12 The regional centers shall: evaluate and treat child abuse and
13 neglect; be resources for the region and develop additional resources
14 within a region; provide training and consultative services; and be
15 available for emergency phone consultation 24-hours a day. The
16 centers shall also be a source for research and training for additional
17 medical and mental health personnel dedicated to the identification and
18 treatment of child abuse and neglect.

19 Services provided by the center's staff shall include, but not be
20 limited to:

21 1. Psychological and medical evaluation and treatment of the child,
22 counseling for family members and substance abuse assessment and
23 mental health and substance abuse counseling for the parents or
24 guardians of the child;

25 2. Referral for appropriate social services and medical care;

26 3. Providing testimony regarding alleged child abuse or neglect at
27 judicial proceedings;

28 4. Treatment recommendations for the child and mental health and
29 substance abuse treatment recommendations for his family, and mental
30 health and substance abuse treatment recommendations for persons
31 convicted of child abuse or neglect;

32 5. Receiving referrals from the Division of Youth and Family
33 Services and the county prosecutor's office and assisting them in any
34 investigation of child abuse or neglect; and

35 6. Providing educational material and seminars on child abuse and
36 neglect and the services the center provides to children, parents,
37 teachers, law enforcement, the judiciary, attorneys and other citizens.

38 The regional center may charge a sliding scale fee for services
39 provided under this bill.

40 Regional centers shall act as a resource in the establishment and
41 maintenance of county based multidisciplinary teams which work in
42 conjunction with the county prosecutor and the Division of Youth and
43 Family Services in the investigation of child abuse and neglect in the
44 county in which the child who is undergoing evaluation and treatment
45 resides. The Commissioner of Human Services, in consultation with

1 the Governor's Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect, shall establish
2 standards for the county teams.

3 The bill also establishes an 18-member Diagnostic and Treatment
4 Advisory Council to oversee the programs of the regional centers, help
5 facilitate communications among the centers, county teams, law
6 enforcement officials and the Division of Youth and Family Services,
7 develop standards of care for the treatment of child abuse and neglect,
8 and help coordinate any research it deems appropriate.

9 Finally, the bill appropriates \$1.5 million from the General Fund to
10 the Department of Human Services to carry out the provisions of the
11 bill.

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16 Establishes four regional diagnostic and treatment centers for child
17 abuse; appropriates \$1.5 million.