

CHAPTER 445
(CORRECTED COPY)

AN ACT concerning the mental health care programs and services offered by institutions of higher education and supplementing chapter 61D of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

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

C.18A:61D-19 Campus-based mental health care programs, services; access; duties of public, independent institutions of higher education.

1. a. Beginning with the 2021-2022 academic year and in each academic year thereafter, a public and independent institution of higher education shall:

(1) ensure that all on-campus students have access to campus-based mental health care programs and services;

(2) provide assistance and referrals to mental health support services to any student unable to access on-campus services; and

(3) provide each newly enrolled student with information concerning the location and availability of those programs and services.

b. Beginning with the 2021-2022 academic year, each public and independent institution of higher education shall establish and maintain, on a 24-hour basis, a toll-free telephone hotline for students. The hotline shall receive and respond to calls from students seeking counseling for depression, anxiety, stress, or other psychological or emotional tension, trauma, or disorder. The operators of the hotline shall seek to identify those callers who should be referred to additional counseling services, and to provide such referrals.

The number for the hotline shall be posted in each dormitory, library, and student center, and any other facility or area on campus that the institution determines to be appropriate.

c. The operators of the hotline shall be, to the greatest extent possible, persons who by experience or education are (1) familiar with the emotional and psychological tensions, depressions, and anxieties unique to higher education students; or (2) trained to provide counseling services involving substance abuse, personal stress management, and other emotional or psychological disorders or conditions which may be likely to adversely affect the well-being of students.

d. An institution of higher education may satisfy the hotline requirement established pursuant to subsection b. of this section by providing each student with the hotline number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, the NJ Hopeline, or any 24/7 mental health hotline deemed appropriate by the Secretary of Higher Education. In addition to providing students with the hotline numbers, the institution shall post the hotline numbers in each dormitory, library, and student center, and any other facility or area on campus that the institution determines to be appropriate.

2. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to the 2021-2022 academic year.

Approved January 18, 2022.