

ASSEMBLY, No. 3713

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 2, 2022

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman SADAF F. JAFFER

District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)

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District 18 (Middlesex)

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District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

Co-Sponsored by:

**Assemblymen Sampson, Freiman, Caputo, Assemblywomen Eulner,
Piperno and Jasey**

SYNOPSIS

“College Mental Health Services Act”; establishes grant program for public institutions of higher education and requires public institutions of higher education to report certain information concerning mental health treatment and suicides.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/9/2022)

1 AN ACT concerning mental health on college campuses and
2 supplementing chapter 62 of Title 18A of the New Jersey
3 Statutes.

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

7
8 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the “College
9 Mental Health Services Act.”

10
11 2. a. There is established in the Office of the Secretary of
12 Higher Education the “College Mental Health Services Grant
13 Program.” The purpose of the program shall be to allocate grant
14 moneys to public institutions of higher education to improve access
15 to mental health services on the campuses of the institutions.

16 b. A grant received by a public institution of higher education
17 under the program shall be specifically used for efforts to improve
18 student access to, and the timeliness of the provision of, mental
19 health services and supports. The grant may be used for, but is not
20 limited to:

21 (1) developing initiatives to reduce wait times for students
22 seeking mental health services and supports;

23 (2) hiring additional mental health professionals to provide
24 mental health services and supports to students at the institution;

25 (3) contracting with independent public or private entities to
26 provide mental health services and supports;

27 (4) creating methods to enhance the identification of students
28 who may be experiencing personal, school, or family difficulties
29 impacting the student’s mental health; and

30 (5) implementing efforts to increase awareness among students
31 of existing on-campus and community resources for students
32 experiencing mental health difficulties.

33 c. To be eligible for consideration for a grant award, a public
34 institution of higher education shall submit an application to the
35 Secretary of Higher Education, in accordance with application
36 procedures and requirements prescribed by the secretary. A grant
37 application shall include a complete description of the institution’s
38 specific plans and objectives for the use of the grant funds and any
39 other information specified by the secretary.

40 d. The secretary shall establish selection criteria for the
41 awarding of grant funds under the program. The secretary shall
42 establish the amount for each grant that is approved.

43
44 3. a. There is created within the Office of the Secretary of
45 Higher Education a fund to be known as the “College Mental Health
46 Services Grant Fund.” The fund shall be used to provide grants to
47 New Jersey public institutions of higher education under the

1 “College Mental Health Services Grant Program” established
2 pursuant to section 2 of this act.

3 b. The fund shall annually be credited with moneys
4 appropriated by the State, any moneys received by the State from
5 corporate donors or other private sector support, and any federal
6 funds which may become available for higher education and mental
7 health services and supports purposes.

8

9 4. a. Beginning with the first full academic year following the
10 date of enactment of this act, a public institution of higher education
11 shall provide for public inspection on its Internet website
12 information on:

13 (1) the ratio of students to mental health professionals at the
14 institution;

15 (2) the total number of students who had appointments with a
16 mental health professional at the institution;

17 (3) the number of students who had only one appointment with a
18 mental health professional at the institution;

19 (4) the number of students who had three or more appointments
20 with a mental health professional at the institution;

21 (5) the total number of appointments made by students with
22 mental health professionals at the institution;

23 (6) the average number of appointments for those students who
24 had more than one appointment with a mental health professional at
25 the institution;

26 (7) the average wait time for students to meet with a mental
27 health professional at the institution;

28 (8) the number of students who were referred to outside mental
29 health services; and

30 (9) the number of students who were referred to emergency care
31 due to mental health concerns.

32 The information required pursuant to this subsection shall be
33 recorded for each semester and shall be posted no more than 60
34 days following the end of each semester. The information shall be
35 posted on the institution’s Internet website in a prominent and
36 easily accessible location.

37 b. Beginning with the first full academic year following the date of
38 enactment of this act, a public institution of higher education shall
39 report to the Secretary of Higher Education on:

40 (1) the total number of students enrolled in the institution who
41 committed suicide in the previous academic year; and

42 (2) the total number of students enrolled in the institution who
43 attempted to commit suicide in the previous academic year.

44 The secretary shall report the total number of student suicides
45 and student suicide attempts at all public institutions of higher
46 education combined to the Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant
47 to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1). The secretary may

1 authorize limited disclosure of the data collected pursuant to this
2 subsection for use in medical, academic, or policy studies.

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4 5. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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9 This bill, known as the “College Mental Health Services Act,”
10 establishes in the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education the
11 “College Mental Health Services Grant Program.” The purpose of
12 the program will be to allocate grant moneys to senior public
13 institutions of higher education and county colleges in the State to
14 establish or improve access to mental health services on the
15 campuses of the institutions.

16 A grant received by a public institution of higher education
17 under the program is to be specifically used for efforts to improve
18 student access to, and the timeliness of the provision of, mental
19 health services and supports. The grant may be used for, but is not
20 limited to: developing initiatives to reduce wait times for students
21 seeking mental health services and supports; hiring additional
22 mental health professionals to provide mental health services and
23 supports to students at the institution; contracting with independent
24 public or private entities to provide mental health services and
25 supports; creating methods to enhance the identification of students
26 who may be experiencing personal, school, or family difficulties
27 impacting the student’s mental health; and implementing efforts to
28 increase awareness among students of existing on-campus and
29 community resources for students experiencing mental health
30 difficulties.

31 The bill also requires public institutions of higher education to
32 post on their Internet websites the following information for each
33 semester: the ratio of students to mental health professionals at the
34 institution; the total number of students who had appointments with
35 a mental health professional at the institution; the number of
36 students who had only one appointment with a mental health
37 professional; the number of students who had three or more
38 appointments with a mental health professional; the total number of
39 appointments made by students with mental health professionals;
40 the average number of appointments for those students who had
41 more than one appointment with a mental health professional; the
42 average wait time for students to receive appointments with a
43 mental health professional; the number of students who were
44 referred to outside mental health services; and the number of
45 students who were referred to emergency care due to mental health
46 concerns. The information will be updated no more than 60 days
47 following the end of each semester and will be posted on the
48 institution’s website.

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1 The bill also requires each public institution of higher education
2 to annually report to the Secretary of Higher Education on the total
3 number of students enrolled in the institution who committed
4 suicide in the previous academic year, and the total number of
5 students enrolled in the institution who attempted to commit suicide
6 in the previous academic year. The secretary must report the total
7 number of student suicides and student suicide attempts at all public
8 institutions of higher education combined to the Governor, and to
9 the Legislature. The secretary may also authorize limited disclosure
10 of the collected data in medical, academic, or policy studies.