

ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 3713

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 14, 2022

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 3713 (1R).

This bill, known as the “College Mental Health Services Act,” establishes in the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education the “College Mental Health Services Grant Program,” for a period of three years. The purpose of the program will be to allocate grant moneys to public institutions of higher education in the State to establish or improve access to mental health services on the campuses of the institutions.

A grant received by a public institution of higher education under the program is to be specifically used for efforts to improve student access to, and the timeliness of the provision of, mental health services and supports. The grant may be used for, but is not limited to: developing initiatives to reduce wait times for students seeking mental health services and supports; hiring additional mental health professionals to provide mental health services and supports to students at the institution; contracting with independent public or private entities to provide mental health services and supports; creating methods to enhance the identification of students who may be experiencing personal, school, or family difficulties impacting the student’s mental health; implementing efforts to increase awareness among students of existing on-campus and community resources for students experiencing mental health difficulties; and offering Mental Health First Aid accreditation to staff and students.

The bill also requires public institutions of higher education to post on their Internet websites the following information for each semester: the ratio of students who seek mental health services to mental health professionals at the institution; the total number of students who had appointments with a mental health professional at the institution; the total number of appointments, segmented by type of service, made by students with mental health professionals; and the average wait time for students to receive appointments with a mental health professional. The information will be updated no more than 60 days following the end of each semester and will be posted on the institution’s website.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) finds that this bill will increase annual State expenditures due to the bill's establishment of the College Mental Health Services Grant Program. While the OLS finds the costs of the program to be indeterminate and dependent on resource allocation decisions by the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, the OLS posits based on allocations from other states that a reasonable maximum of annual costs is \$5 million.

Grant moneys allocated to public institutions of higher education to improve access to campus mental health services would represent revenue increases to these institutions.

The OLS determines that public institutions of higher education may experience marginal administrative cost increases due to the bill's requirement that the institutions post certain information on their websites regarding student mental health services.