

ASSEMBLY, No. 2735

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

222nd LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2026 SESSION

Sponsored by:

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District 8 (Atlantic and Burlington)

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SYNOPSIS

Requires DHS and DOH to study disordered eating; establishes "Disordered Eating Prevention Research Grant Pilot Program."

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Assembly Oversight, Reform and Federal Relations Committee with technical review.



1 AN ACT concerning disordered eating and supplementing Title 26
2 of the Revised Statutes.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

8 a. Eating Disorders are increasingly recognized as a leading
9 cause of morbidity and mortality, with 10,200 deaths per year
10 attributed to an eating disorder in the United States;

11 b. According to the Strategic Training Initiative for the
12 Prevention of Eating Disorders, in New Jersey, nine percent of
13 residents, or more than three-quarters of a million people, will have
14 an eating disorder in their lifetime;

15 c. People of color; lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender
16 individuals; youth; and older residents are more likely to suffer
17 from an eating disorder, but less likely to receive eating disorder
18 treatment, creating a disproportionate gap in eating disorder
19 prevention and care;

20 d. There is limited State-specific research on disordered eating
21 and its impact on the residents of New Jersey; and

22 e. It is fitting and proper for the State to focus on developing
23 research and resources to educate residents on the severity of
24 disordered eating, to prevent disordered eating in New Jersey, and
25 to support residents who develop disordered eating – with a
26 recognition that disordered eating disproportionately harms and
27 increases the mortality rates of people of color; lesbian gay,
28 bisexual, or transgender individuals; youth; and older residents.

29

30 2. As used in this act:

31 “Disordered eating” means a range of irregular eating behaviors
32 that may or may not warrant diagnosis of a specific eating disorder.

33 “Disordered Eating Prevention Research Grant Pilot Program” or
34 “grant program” means the Disordered Eating Prevention Research
35 Grant Pilot Program established pursuant to section 4 of this act.

36 “Division” means the Division of Mental Health and Addiction
37 Services in the Department of Human Services.

38 “Eligible applicant” means an individual, nonprofit organization,
39 or for-profit organization, that conducts research on disordered
40 eating and prevention in youth, adults, and older residents or that
41 serves youth, adults, and older residents who have disordered eating
42 traits.

43 “Grant recipient” means an eligible applicant that the division
44 selects to receive money through the grant program.

45

46 3. a. The division and the Department of Health shall conduct
47 a study on the causes, prevention, and reduction of disordered
48 eating in New Jersey.

1 b. Within 18 months following the effective date of this act, the
2 Commissioner of Human Services and the Commissioner of Health
3 shall prepare and submit to the Governor and, pursuant to section 2
4 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the Legislature, a report
5 containing the study's findings and recommendations.

6 c. The study shall include, but shall not be limited to:

7 (1) determining key information about disordered eating,
8 including risk factors and preventing factors;

9 (2) identifying gaps in treatment for disordered eating;

10 (3) evaluating prevention strategies, including dismantling
11 discrimination and bias with regard to weight; and

12 (4) making recommendations to facilitate public outreach, and
13 increase awareness regarding disordered eating prevention, with a
14 focus on impacted communities, such as youth, older residents,
15 people of color, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender
16 individuals;

17 d. The division may:

18 (1) contract with a third party to conduct focus groups,
19 interview key individuals, conduct surveys, and establish a
20 collaborative group to discuss key issues regarding disordered
21 eating prevention;

22 (2) partner with the Department of Education to inform teachers,
23 administrators, school staff, students, and parents on disorder eating
24 prevention; and

25 (3) seek, accept, and expend gifts, grants, or donations from
26 private or public sources for the purpose of this act.

27
28 4. a. There is hereby established a three-year Disordered Eating
29 Prevention Research Grant Pilot Program within the division. This
30 grant program shall provide financial assistance to eligible
31 applicants to conduct research on or research related to barriers to,
32 and gaps within, the treatment of disordered eating; the root causes
33 of disordered eating; and the risk factors and protective factors for
34 disordered eating in youth, adults, and older residents.

35 b. The division shall administer the grant program and shall
36 adopt guidelines for the grant program, which guidelines shall
37 include:

38 (1) application procedures by which eligible applicants may
39 apply for a grant;

40 (2) criteria to use in selecting eligible applicants to receive grant
41 money and to determine the amount of grant money to be awarded
42 to each grant recipient, according to the availability of resources for
43 the grant program;

44 (3) procedures for administering the grant program, including
45 establishment of the dates the division will announce the grant
46 program, begin accepting applications, allow eligible applicants to
47 submit applications, and begin distributing money to the grantees;
48 and

1 (4) reporting procedures for grant recipients.

2 c. Each grant recipient shall submit a written report to the
3 division, which report shall include a summary of the research made
4 possible with the grant award.

5

6 5. Commencing one year after the effective date of this act, and
7 annually thereafter, the division shall submit to the Governor and,
8 pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the
9 Legislature, a report that summarizes the following information
10 regarding the administration of the Disordered Eating Prevention
11 Research Grant Pilot Program:

12 a. the number of grant recipients;

13 b. the amount of each grant award to each grant recipient; and

14 c. a summary of each grant recipient's written report, as required
15 to be submitted to the division pursuant to subsection c. of section 4
16 of this act.

17

18 6. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire three
19 years thereafter.