

SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR CITIZENS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO **SENATE, No. 4412**

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 11, 2026

The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 4412.

This bill, as amended, provides for youth mental health care professionals in family court.

Under the provisions of the bill, the Superior Court, Chancery Division, Family Part in each vicinage must provide for a youth mental health care professional. A "youth mental health care professional" is a social worker, psychologist, or psychiatrist licensed or certified pursuant to State law with experience in youth development, youth mental health conditions, trauma and the impact of trauma, trauma-informed practices, and evidence-based mental health services. A youth mental health care professional would be a State employee and in the unclassified service.

The youth mental health care professional would support and advise, upon the request of a judge, the court in an action or proceeding submitted to or heard by the Superior Court, Chancery Division, Family Part, where an individual under 18 years of age is a party to the action or proceeding or a subject of the action or proceeding.

The youth mental health care professional would assist and collaborate with other mental health professionals and service providers to assist the court with: identifying youth with mental health needs; recognizing when specific mental health interventions are indicated; providing a referral for evidence-based mental health services when appropriate; and connecting youth and caregivers to appropriate supports in a timely manner.

In addition, the bill amends provisions of State law concerning the disclosure of juvenile records to permit a youth mental health care professional to have access to information and records relevant to the youth, including juvenile delinquency records otherwise confidential under State law.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments revise the bill to define “youth” as an individual under the age of 18 years. As introduced, the bill defined “youth” as an individual under 21 years of age. Additionally, the committee amendments revise the bill to give a judge of the Family Court discretion in utilizing the services of a youth mental health care professional, and directs the youth mental health care professional to collaborate and assist with other mental health practitioners and service providers in order to better assist the court.

Additionally, the committee amendments make various technical corrections to the bill.