

SENATE, No. 2898

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED SEPTEMBER 13, 2018

Sponsored by:

Senator FRED H. MADDEN, JR.

District 4 (Camden and Gloucester)

Senator PAUL A. SARLO

District 36 (Bergen and Passaic)

Assemblywoman CAROL A. MURPHY

District 7 (Burlington)

Assemblywoman GABRIELA M. MOSQUERA

District 4 (Camden and Gloucester)

Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE

District 37 (Bergen)

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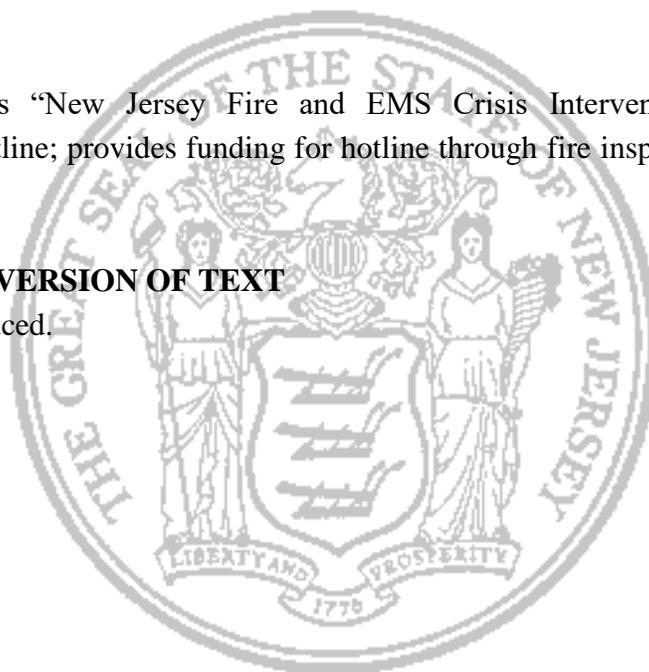
**Senators Greenstein, A.R.Bucco, Ruiz, Assemblywoman McKnight,
Assemblyman Danielsen, Assemblywomen Sumter, DiMaso, B.DeCroce,
Assemblymen Johnson, Space and Wirths**

SYNOPSIS

Establishes “New Jersey Fire and EMS Crisis Intervention Services” telephone hotline; provides funding for hotline through fire inspection fees and penalties.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/17/2019)

1 AN ACT establishing and funding a “New Jersey Fire and EMS
2 Crisis Intervention Services” telephone hotline and
3 supplementing Title 52 of the Revised Statutes.

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

7
8 1. As used in P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the
9 Legislature as this bill):

10 "Division" means the Division of Fire Safety in the Department
11 of Community Affairs.

12 "University" means Rutgers, The State University/University
13 Behavioral Health Care.

14
15 2. a. The division, in conjunction with the university, shall
16 establish and maintain, on a 24-hour daily basis, a toll-free "New
17 Jersey Fire and EMS Crisis Intervention Services" telephone
18 hotline. The hotline shall receive and respond to calls from fire and
19 emergency services personnel who experience depression, anxiety,
20 stress, or any other psychological or emotional disorder or
21 condition. The operators of the hotline shall identify and refer
22 callers to further debriefing and counseling services.

23 b. The operators of the hotline shall be trained by the division
24 and the university, and, to the greatest extent possible, shall be
25 persons who are: (1) familiar with the post-trauma disorders and
26 psychological and emotional disorders and conditions that are
27 frequently experienced by fire and emergency services personnel; or
28 (2) trained to provide counseling services involving marriage and
29 family life, substance abuse, personal stress management, and other
30 emotional or psychological disorders or conditions that may
31 adversely affect fire and emergency services personnel.

32 c. The division and the university shall provide for the
33 confidentiality of the names of the fire and emergency services
34 personnel calling, the information discussed by a caller and
35 operator, and any referrals for further debriefing or counseling.
36 However, the division, after consultation with the university, may,
37 by rule and regulation, establish guidelines for monitoring any fire
38 or emergency services caller who exhibits signs of a severe
39 emotional or psychological disorder or condition which the operator
40 handling the call reasonably believes may result in harm to the
41 caller or any other person.

42
43 3. The division, after consultation with the university, shall
44 prepare a list of the following persons who are willing to accept
45 referrals and administer the debriefing and counseling services
46 provided through the telephone hotline: appropriately licensed or
47 certified psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers;
48 appropriately trained and qualified counselors; and experienced
49 former fire and emergency services personnel.

1 4. In establishing the hotline pursuant to the provisions of
2 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill),
3 the division and university shall consult with a representative from
4 the New Jersey Career Fire Chiefs Association; New Jersey State
5 Firefighters Mutual Benevolent Association; Professional
6 Firefighters Association of New Jersey; New Jersey Hospital
7 Association; New Jersey Association of Paramedic Programs; EMS
8 Council of New Jersey; New Jersey State Fire Chiefs Association;
9 any other exclusive bargaining representative for a New Jersey fire
10 department or force, or emergency services agency or provider; and
11 any others that the division deems appropriate.

12

13 5. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, an
14 amount not less than \$250,000, as determined by the Commissioner
15 of Community Affairs, shall be annually appropriated to defray the
16 costs associated with operating and maintaining the "New Jersey
17 Fire and EMS Crisis Intervention Services" telephone hotline. The
18 appropriation shall be payable out of the fees and penalties derived
19 from fire code enforcement activities pursuant to the "Uniform Fire
20 Safety Act," P.L.1983, c.383 (C.52:27D-192 et seq.).

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22 6. This act shall take effect on the first day of the fifth month
23 following enactment, but the Director of the Division of Fire Safety
24 may take any anticipatory administrative action in advance as shall
25 be necessary for the implementation of the act.

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STATEMENT

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30 This bill directs the Division of Fire Safety in the Department of
31 Community Affairs, in conjunction with Rutgers, The State
32 University/University Behavioral Health Care, to establish a 24-
33 hour, toll-free "New Jersey Fire and EMS Crisis Intervention
34 Services" telephone hotline. The division and university are to
35 consult with representatives of certain fire and emergency services
36 organizations when establishing the hotline.

37 The hotline would be available to fire and emergency services
38 personnel experiencing depression, anxiety, stress, or any other
39 psychological or emotional disorder or condition. When necessary
40 and appropriate, hotline operators would refer callers to further
41 debriefing and counseling services.

42 To ensure the integrity of the telephone hotline and to encourage
43 fire and emergency services personnel to utilize those services, the
44 division is required to provide for the confidentiality of each caller
45 to the hotline. However, the division, after consultation with the
46 university, may establish guidelines for monitoring any fire or
47 emergency services caller who exhibits signs of a severe
48 psychological or emotional disorder or condition that may result in
49 harm to the caller or others.

1 The division and the university are required to train the hotline
2 operators. To the greatest extent possible, these operators are to be:
3 (1) familiar with the post trauma disorders and psychological and
4 emotional disorders and conditions that are frequently experienced
5 by fire and emergency services personnel; or (2) trained to provide
6 counseling services involving marriage and family life, substance
7 abuse, personal stress management, and other psychological or
8 emotional disorders or conditions that may adversely affect fire and
9 emergency services personnel.

10 The bill also directs the division, after consultation with the
11 university, to prepare a list of the following persons who are willing
12 to assist hotline callers (1) licensed or certified psychiatrists,
13 psychologists, and social workers; (2) qualified counselors; (3) and
14 experienced former fire and emergency services personnel.

15 The bill also requires the State to annually appropriate an amount
16 not less than \$250,000, as determined by the Commissioner of
17 Community Affairs, to support the costs associated with operating
18 and maintaining the telephone hotline. This annual appropriation
19 would be supported through the fees and penalties collected by the
20 division through fire code enforcement activities.