

ASSEMBLY, No. 3043

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 20, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman PAMELA R. LAMPITT

District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes “New Jersey Community Health Worker Program” in DOH to facilitate linking medically underserved communities with health care resources.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **AN ACT** establishing the “New Jersey Community Health Worker
2 Program” and supplementing Title 26 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. a. There is established in the Department of Health the New
8 Jersey Community Health Worker Program. The program shall
9 establish standardized community health worker training and
10 certification programs within institutions of higher education, and
11 shall integrate community health worker services into State
12 Medicaid reimbursement programs for the purposes of improving
13 health outcomes, reducing health care costs, and reducing inequities
14 in the availability and provision of health care services.

15 b. The Commissioner of Health shall appoint a director of the
16 New Jersey Community Health Worker Program, who shall, in
17 consultation with the New Jersey Community Health Worker
18 Program Advisory Board established pursuant to section 2 of this
19 act, be responsible for overseeing and administering all aspects of
20 the program. The commissioner shall make available to the director
21 such staff and resources as may be necessary for the purposes of
22 implementing the program.

23 c. The director shall establish the New Jersey Community
24 Health Worker Program in Newark no later than one year after the
25 effective date of this act. Thereafter, the director shall establish and
26 implement the program in such additional municipalities as the
27 director determines necessary and appropriate in light of available
28 resources and the need for community health worker services and
29 the need for community health worker training and certification
30 programs in a given region, county, or municipality. The director
31 shall seek to establish the program Statewide no later than five
32 years after the effective date of this act.

33 d. The director shall be authorized to accept funding as may be
34 made available from the federal government, the State, and the
35 private sector to effectuate the purposes of this act.

36 e. No later than one year after the effective date of this act, and
37 annually thereafter, the director shall report to the Legislature,
38 pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), on the
39 implementation of the provisions of this act, including
40 recommendations for such legislative action as may be appropriate
41 and necessary to facilitate the establishment, implementation,
42 expansion, and improvement of the New Jersey Community Health
43 Worker Program.

44 f. As used in this act, “community health worker” means a
45 professional who is certified to connect health care consumers with
46 health care providers and resources, with the goal of facilitating
47 access to health care in medically underserved communities and
48 educating health care providers about the unique obstacles faced by

1 members of that community when seeking access to health care. To
2 the extent possible, community health workers shall serve in the
3 communities in which they live.

4
5 2. a. There is established in the Department of Health the New
6 Jersey Community Health Worker Program Advisory Board, which
7 shall assist the Director of the New Jersey Community Health
8 Worker Program to develop training and certification programs,
9 identify medically underserved communities and the unique
10 challenges facing those communities in obtaining access to health
11 care, and develop strategies for effectively implementing the New
12 Jersey Community Health Worker Program Statewide.

13 b. The board shall comprise nine members, to be appointed as
14 follows:

15 (1) the Commissioners of Health and Human Services, or their
16 designees, who shall serve ex officio; and

17 (2) seven public members, of which three shall be appointed by
18 the Governor, and one each shall be appointed by the Senate
19 President, the Senate Minority Leader, the Speaker of the General
20 Assembly, and the Assembly Minority Leader. The public
21 members shall include:

22 (a) three representatives of community health centers, with one
23 each from the southern, central, and northern regions of the State;

24 (b) one representative from a general hospital;

25 (c) one representative from a long-term care facility;

26 (d) one representative from a two-year institution of higher
27 education; and

28 (e) one representative from a four-year institution of higher
29 education.

30 c. The public members shall serve for a term of five years,
31 except that, of the seven public members first appointed, the first
32 two members appointed shall serve for a term of three years, the
33 second two members appointed shall serve for a term of four years,
34 and the next three members appointed shall serve for a term of five
35 years. A public member is eligible to be reappointed to the board.
36 A member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring in the membership
37 of the board for any reason other than the expiration of the term
38 shall have a term of appointment for the unexpired term only. All
39 vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the original
40 appointment.

41 d. The board shall organize as soon as practicable following the
42 appointment of its members, and the members shall select a
43 chairperson and vice chairperson from among themselves. The
44 chairperson shall appoint a secretary who need not be a member of
45 the board.

46 e. Members of the board shall serve without compensation, but
47 shall be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the
48 performance of their duties.

1 f. The board shall meet at least twice per calendar year, and at
2 such other times as the chairperson shall designate.

3 g. The Department of Health shall provide staff services and
4 other necessary support to the board. The board may also request
5 the assistance and services of the employees of any State, county, or
6 municipal department, board, bureau, commission, task force, or
7 agency as it may require and as may be available to it for its
8 purposes.

9
10 3. The Commissioner of Human Services shall apply for such
11 State plan amendments or waivers as may be necessary to
12 implement the provisions of this act and to secure federal financial
13 participation for State Medicaid expenditures under the federal
14 Medicaid program.

15
16 4. The Commissioner of Health, in accordance with the
17 provisions of the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410
18 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), shall promulgate such rules and regulations as
19 are necessary to effectuate the purposes of this act.

20
21 5. This act shall take effect immediately.

22

23

24 STATEMENT

25

26 This bill establishes the New Jersey Community Health Worker
27 Program in the Department of Health. Community health workers
28 are certified professionals who connect health care consumers with
29 health care providers and resources, with the goal of facilitating
30 access to health care in medically underserved communities and
31 educating health care providers about the unique obstacles faced by
32 members of that community when seeking access to health care.

33 The purpose of the New Jersey Community Health Worker
34 Program will be to establish standardized community health worker
35 training and certification programs within institutions of higher
36 education, and integrate community health worker services into
37 State Medicaid reimbursement programs for the purposes of
38 improving health outcomes, reducing health care costs, and
39 reducing inequities in the availability and provision of health care
40 services.

41 The Commissioner of Health will be required to appoint a
42 director for the program, who will be responsible for overseeing and
43 administering all aspects of the program in consultation with the
44 New Jersey Community Health Worker Program Advisory Board,
45 which will also be established under the bill. The bill requires the
46 program to be established and implemented in Newark within one
47 year following enactment, and thereafter expanded to such
48 additional municipalities as the director determines necessary and

1 appropriate in light of available resources and the need for the
2 program in a given region, county, or municipality. The director
3 will be required to seek to implement the program Statewide within
4 five years after the date of enactment. The director will be
5 authorized to accept funding as may be made available from the
6 federal government, the State, and the private sector to implement
7 the program.

8 The director will be required to report annually to the Legislature
9 on the implementation of the program, including recommendations
10 for such legislative action as may be appropriate and necessary to
11 facilitate the establishment, implementation, expansion, and
12 improvement of the program.

13 The bill additionally establishes the New Jersey Community
14 Health Worker Program Advisory Board to assist the director to
15 develop training and certification programs, identify medically
16 underserved communities and the unique challenges facing those
17 communities in obtaining access to health care, and develop
18 strategies for effectively implementing the program Statewide.

19 The board will comprise nine members, including the
20 Commissioners of Health and Human Services, or their designees,
21 who will serve ex officio, and seven public members, of which
22 three will be appointed by the Governor, and one each will be
23 appointed by the Senate President, the Senate Minority Leader, the
24 Speaker of the General Assembly, and the Assembly Minority
25 Leader. The public members will include three representatives of
26 community health centers, with one each from the southern, central,
27 and northern regions of the State; one representative from a general
28 hospital; one representative from a long-term care facility; one
29 representative from a two-year institution of higher education; and
30 one representative from a four-year institution of higher education.

31 The public members will serve for a term of five years, except
32 that, of the seven members first appointed, the first two will serve
33 for a term of three years, the second two will serve for a term of
34 four years, and the next three will serve for a term of five years.
35 Public members will be eligible for reappointment.

36 The board will organize as soon as practicable following the
37 appointment of its members select a chairperson and vice
38 chairperson from among the members. The members will serve
39 without compensation, but will be reimbursed for necessary
40 expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. The board
41 will meet at least twice per calendar year and at such other times as
42 the chairperson designates. The Department of Health will provide
43 staff services and other necessary support to the board. The board
44 may also request the assistance and services of the employees of
45 any State, county, or municipal department, board, bureau,
46 commission, task force, or agency as it may require and as may be
47 available to it for its purposes.