

ASSEMBLY, No. 3293

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 25, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE

District 37 (Bergen)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes remote medical consultation assistance grant program in DOH.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **AN ACT** concerning remote consultations by community health
2 centers and supplementing Title 26 of the Revised Statutes.

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

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7 1. There is established in the Department of Health a remote
8 medical consultation assistance grant program. The purpose of this
9 program shall be to award grants, subject to appropriations, to
10 federally qualified health centers to enable and encourage their
11 primary health care providers to employ technology to consult with
12 medical specialists whose expertise may otherwise be difficult for
13 the center's patients to access, with the intention that this improved
14 access to specialist knowledge will improve the quality of care
15 provided at participating health centers and reduce the need for
16 costly face-to-face patient visits to medical specialists. Grant
17 recipients shall use funding awarded pursuant to this act for costs
18 associated with participation in a remote medical consultation
19 program, which may include, but need not be limited to,
20 participation or membership fees and acquisition and maintenance
21 of computer equipment used for remote consultations.

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23 2. This act shall take effect on July 1 next following the date of
24 enactment, except that the Commissioner of Health may take any
25 anticipatory administrative action in advance as shall be necessary for
26 the implementation of this act.

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STATEMENT

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31 This bill would establish in the Department of Health a remote
32 medical consultation assistance grant program. The purpose of the
33 program is to award grants, subject to appropriations, to federally
34 qualified health centers to enable and encourage their primary
35 health care providers to employ technology to consult with medical
36 specialists whose expertise may otherwise be difficult for the
37 center's patients to access, with the intention that this improved
38 access to specialist knowledge will improve the quality of care
39 provided at participating health centers and reduce the need for
40 costly face-to-face patient visits to medical specialists. Grant
41 recipients would be required to use grant funds for costs associated
42 with participation in a remote medical consultation program, which
43 may include, but need not be limited to, participation or
44 membership fees and acquisition and maintenance of computer
45 equipment used for remote consultations.

46 One such program, Project ECHO, connects primary care
47 providers to teams of specialists via weekly video conferences on
48 specific topics, allowing the primary care providers to discuss

1 specific patients' cases and improve their general knowledge of the
2 best evidence-based treatments for their patients' most common
3 problems. The program was started at the University of New
4 Mexico in 2003, and has since grown to include over 370 hubs in 38
5 countries assisting providers who focus on a variety of specialties,
6 including women's health, diabetes, addiction, and chronic pain.