

ASSEMBLY, No. 5726

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 17, 2021

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman LOUIS D. GREENWALD

District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

Assemblyman DANIEL R. BENSON

District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

Assemblywoman GABRIELA M. MOSQUERA

District 4 (Camden and Gloucester)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman Vainieri Huttie and Assemblyman Verrelli

SYNOPSIS

Provides for free mental health screen tool and reimbursements to certain mental health care providers; appropriates \$15 million from available federal funds.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/1/2021)

1 AN ACT concerning COVID-19, mental health screenings, and
2 making an appropriation.

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

6
7 1. a. (1) The Department of Human Services shall develop
8 and maintain on its Internet website a free, online mental health
9 screening tool for individuals under the age of 18 to determine if
10 such individuals should seek mental health care. If the mental
11 health screening tool determines that an individual should seek
12 mental health care, the Internet website of the Department of Health
13 shall automatically link the individual to mental health care
14 providers who: possess relevant expertise and specialties; are within
15 close geographic proximity to the individual; and accept the
16 individual's health care insurance.

17 (2) The Department of Human Services shall conduct a public
18 awareness campaign regarding the mental health screen tool
19 established pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection and the
20 COVID-19 Mental Health Screening Reimbursement Program
21 established pursuant to subsection b. of this section and disseminate
22 such information to mental health care providers and schools. The
23 Department of Human Services shall encourage mental health care
24 providers and schools to promote the mental health screening tool
25 and urge students use the mental health screening tool.

26 b. (1) There is hereby established in the Department of Human
27 Services the COVID-19 Mental Health Screening Reimbursement
28 Program. The program shall award reimbursements from available
29 funds to licensed mental health care providers who conduct in-
30 person or virtual mental health visits with individuals under the age
31 of 18 in this State due to potential mental health issues suffered by
32 the individuals as a result of conditions and events surrounding the
33 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak.

34 (2) The Commissioner of Human Services shall develop an
35 application and determine required documentation which a mental
36 health care provider shall submit to the department in order to be
37 preauthorized for reimbursement and to receive actual
38 reimbursement for no more than three mental health visits per
39 patient under the COVID-19 Mental Health Screening
40 Reimbursement Program. The commissioner shall provide notice of
41 the availability of funding for this program and make the
42 application available on the department's Internet website. Upon
43 receipt of an application, the commissioner shall review the
44 application and, subject to the availability of funds, preauthorize
45 reimbursement to each approved applicant.

46 (3) The Commissioner of Human Services shall determine one
47 standard rate of reimbursement per mental health care visit for all
48 health care providers participating in the COVID-19 Mental Health

1 Screening Reimbursement Program for both in-person and virtual
2 visits. The commissioner shall reimburse mental health care
3 providers participating in the COVID-19 Mental Health Screening
4 Reimbursement Program the full standard rate for each approved
5 mental health care visit minus any compensation received by the
6 mental health care provider from a health care insurance company
7 or the patient.

8 c. The Commissioner of Human Services shall maintain the
9 confidentiality of any information received pursuant to the
10 provisions of this act in accordance with federal and State privacy
11 laws.

12
13 2. There is appropriated \$15,000,000 from available federal
14 COVID-19 relief funds to the Department of Human Services to
15 fulfill the provisions of this act.

16
17 3. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire upon
18 the distribution of the monies appropriated by this act.

19
20
21 STATEMENT

22
23 This bill provides for a free mental health screen tool and
24 reimbursements to certain mental health care providers.

25 Under the bill, the Department of Human Services (department)
26 is to develop and maintain on its Internet website a free, online
27 mental health screening tool for individuals under the age of 18 to
28 determine if such individuals should seek mental health care. The
29 department is to develop and maintain on its Internet website a free,
30 online mental health screening tool for individuals under the age of
31 18 to determine if such individuals should seek mental health care.
32 If the mental health screening tool determines that an individual
33 should seek mental health care, the Internet website of the
34 department is to automatically link the individual to mental health
35 care providers who: possess relevant expertise and specialties; are
36 within close geographic proximity to the individual; and accept the
37 individual's health care insurance.

38 The department is to conduct a public awareness campaign
39 regarding the mental health screen tool and the COVID-19 Mental
40 Health Screening Reimbursement Program established pursuant to
41 the bill's provisions and disseminate such information to mental
42 health care providers and schools. The department is to encourage
43 mental health care providers and schools to promote the mental
44 health screening tool and urge students use the mental health
45 screening tool.

46 The COVID-19 Mental Health Screening Reimbursement
47 Program (program) is to award reimbursements from available
48 federal funds to licensed mental health care providers who conduct

1 in-person or virtual mental health visits with individuals under the
2 age of 18 in this State due to potential mental health issues suffered
3 by the individuals as a result of conditions and events surrounding
4 the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak.

5 The Commissioner of Human Services (commissioner) is to
6 develop an application and determine required documentation
7 which a mental health care provider is to submit to the department
8 in order to be preauthorized for reimbursement and to receive actual
9 reimbursement for no more than three mental health visits per
10 patient under the program.

11 The commissioner is to determine one standard rate of
12 reimbursement per mental health care visit for all health care
13 providers participating in the program for both in-person and virtual
14 visits. The commissioner is to reimburse mental health care
15 providers participating in the program the full standard rate for each
16 approved mental health care visit minus any compensation received
17 by the mental health care provider from a health care insurance
18 company or the patient.

19 The bill appropriates \$15,000,000 from available federal
20 COVID-19 relief funds to fulfill the bill's provisions.