

**ASSEMBLY CONCURRENT
RESOLUTION No. 146**

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 25, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE

District 37 (Bergen)

SYNOPSIS

Urges Governor to reopen Hagedorn Gero-Psychiatric Hospital.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



- 1 **A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION** urging the Governor to reopen the
2 Senator Garrett W. Hagedorn Gero-Psychiatric Hospital.
3
- 4 **WHEREAS**, The Senator Garrett W. Hagedorn Gero-Psychiatric
5 Hospital (Hagedorn), located in Glen Gardner, Hunterdon County
6 opened as a treatment center for individuals with tuberculosis, was
7 converted into a geriatric psychiatric hospital in the 1970s, and in
8 the early 2000s began accepting seriously ill patients of all ages;
9 and
- 10 **WHEREAS**, According to mental health advocates, Hagedorn was one
11 of the most highly functioning and well-staffed hospitals in the
12 State, and its smaller size and specialization in geriatric mental
13 health filled a niche that other State psychiatric hospitals did not;
14 and
- 15 **WHEREAS**, Hagedorn, at its peak, housed 300 patients, and as of late
16 April of 2010, 184 of Hagedorn's 273 patients were aged 65 years
17 or older; and
- 18 **WHEREAS**, Hagedorn was closed in July 2012, and the reasons given
19 for the closure of the hospital by former Governor Christie included
20 cost savings and an effort to provide treatment for individuals with
21 mental illness in the least restrictive setting possible; and
- 22 **WHEREAS**, Leading up to the hospital's closure in 2012, its 255
23 patients were moved into nursing homes, community placements,
24 or relocated to other State hospitals, and advocates express concern
25 that because of their advanced age or frailty, those former Hagedorn
26 patients may not be able to advocate for themselves to change their
27 situation if their new placements are not providing the necessary
28 levels of care and support; and
- 29 **WHEREAS**, Populations of the other State psychiatric hospitals have
30 increased, in part, due to their absorption of some of the former
31 Hagedorn patients, resulting in the untenable overcrowding and
32 dangerous conditions at Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital, which
33 was built to house 450 people in the main building, but which as of
34 March 2017 housed 560 patients; and
- 35 **WHEREAS**, Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital experienced a marked
36 increase in patient-on-patient and patient-on-staff violence during
37 2017, one of the dangerous consequences of overcrowding and
38 insufficient staffing; and
- 39 **WHEREAS**, According to the World Health Organization, over 20
40 percent of adults aged 60 and over suffer from a mental illness or
41 neurological disorder, including dementia and depression, and
42 between 2015 and 2050, the proportion of the world's older adults
43 is expected to nearly double, thus, the State will be required to meet
44 this ongoing public health need; and
- 45 **WHEREAS**, While it is appropriate and desirable that patients with
46 mental illness be treated in the least restrictive setting possible,
47 there will always be some patients whose illness prevents them
48 from living safely and fully in the community, whose age or

1 condition renders them particularly vulnerable if they were to be
2 hospitalized with other mentally ill patients, or whose illness
3 requires stabilization that only a specialized psychiatric hospital can
4 provide; and

5 **WHEREAS**, It is fitting and appropriate that the State reopen the
6 Senator Garrett W. Hagedorn Gero-Psychiatric Hospital to ensure
7 the safety of not only those patients with mental illness who
8 because of their advanced age have specialized treatment needs that
9 cannot be satisfactorily met in other settings, but of all patients in
10 the State's care; now, therefore,

11
12 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the General Assembly of the State of New
13 Jersey (the Senate concurring):

14
15 1. The Legislature of this State respectfully urges the Governor
16 to reopen the Senator Garrett W. Hagedorn Gero-Psychiatric
17 Hospital so that the State can provide appropriate treatment and
18 support to its older residents with mental illness who require
19 hospitalization, and in the process, potentially help to relieve the
20 dangerous overcrowding of some of the State's other psychiatric
21 hospitals.

22
23 2. Copies of this Resolution, as filed with the Secretary of
24 State, shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly or
25 the Secretary of the Senate to the Governor, the Lieutenant
26 Governor, and the Commissioners of Health and Human Services.

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29 **STATEMENT**

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31 This Concurrent Resolution urges the Governor to reopen the
32 Senator Garrett W. Hagedorn Gero-Psychiatric Hospital so that the
33 State can provide appropriate treatment and support to its older
34 residents with mental illness who require hospitalization, and in the
35 process, potentially help to relieve the dangerous overcrowding of
36 some of the State's other psychiatric hospitals.

37 According to mental health advocates, Hagedorn was one of the
38 most highly functioning and well-staffed hospitals in the State, and
39 its smaller size and specialization in geriatric mental health filled a
40 niche that other State psychiatric hospitals did not. Hagedorn, at its
41 peak, housed 300 patients, and as of late April of 2010, 184 of
42 Hagedorn's 273 patients were aged 65 years or older.

43 Leading up to the hospital's closure in 2012, its 255 patients
44 were moved into nursing homes, community placements, or
45 relocated to other State hospitals, and advocates express concern
46 that because of their advanced age or frailty, those former Hagedorn
47 patients may not be able to advocate for themselves to change their
48 situation if their new placements are not providing the necessary

1 levels of care and support. Populations of the other State psychiatric
2 hospitals have increased, in part, due to their absorption of some of
3 the former Hagedorn patients, resulting in the untenable
4 overcrowding and dangerous conditions at Greystone Park
5 Psychiatric Hospital. While it is appropriate and desirable that
6 patients with mental illness be treated in the least restrictive setting
7 possible, there will always be some patients whose illness prevents
8 them from living safely and fully in the community, whose age or
9 condition renders them particularly vulnerable if they were to be
10 hospitalized with other mentally ill patients, or whose illness
11 requires stabilization that only a specialized psychiatric hospital can
12 provide.