

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 705

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 6, 2021

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 705 (1R).

This bill requires the Department of Health (department) to develop and implement a plan to improve access to perinatal mood and anxiety disorder screening.

Under the bill, the department is to develop and implement a plan to improve access to perinatal mood and anxiety disorder screening, referral, treatment, and support services. The plan is to provide strategies to: (1) increase awareness among mental health care service providers who treat women experiencing perinatal mood and anxiety disorders with regard to the prevalence and effects of perinatal mood and anxiety disorders on women and children; (2) establish a referral network of mental health care providers and support services for women who are in need of perinatal mood and anxiety disorder treatment; (3) increase women's access to formal and informal peer support services, including access to certified peer specialists who have received training related to perinatal mood and anxiety disorders; (4) raise public awareness for, and reduce the stigma related to, perinatal mood and anxiety disorders; and (5) provide available funds to perinatal mood and anxiety disorder screening, referral, treatment, and support services.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) concludes that the bill will result in an indeterminate increase in annual State expenditures incurred by the Department of Health (DOH) to develop and implement a plan to improve access to perinatal mood and anxiety disorder screening, referral, treatment, and support services. The department's ability to utilize the infrastructure of existing programs and policies may help minimize the costs of implementation under the bill.

The OLS notes that several of the department's current efforts as they relate to the bill refer to postpartum depression, a form of perinatal mood or anxiety disorder that occurs after the birth of a child. Perinatal mood or anxiety disorder, however, is a spectrum of emotional complications that can affect expectant or new mothers at

any point during pregnancy or the first year after birth. The department may experience costs under this bill in ensuring that existing efforts are expanded to apply to this broader health issue.