# SENATE, No. 1070

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

## 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JANUARY 30, 2020

**Sponsored by:**
**Senator KRISTIN M. CORRADO**
**District 40 (Bergen, Essex, Morris and Passaic)**

**SYNOPSIS**

"College Mental Health Services Act"; establishes grant program for public institutions of higher education and requires public institutions of higher education to report certain information concerning mental health treatment and suicides.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.

**AN ACT** concerning mental health on college campuses and supplementing chapter 62 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

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

1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "College Mental Health Services Act."

2. a. There is established in the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education the "College Mental Health Services Grant Program." The purpose of the program shall be to allocate grant moneys to public institutions of higher education to improve access to mental health services on the campuses of the institutions.

b. A grant received by a public institution of higher education under the program shall be specifically used for efforts to improve student access to, and the timeliness of the provision of, mental health services and supports. The grant may be used for, but is not limited to:

(1) developing initiatives to reduce wait times for students seeking mental health services and supports;

(2) hiring additional mental health professionals to provide mental health services and supports to students at the institution;

(3) contracting with independent public or private entities to provide mental health services and supports;

(4) creating methods to enhance the identification of students who may be experiencing personal, school, or family difficulties impacting the student's mental health; and

(5) implementing efforts to increase awareness among students of existing on-campus and community resources for students experiencing mental health difficulties.

c. To be eligible for consideration for a grant award, a public institution of higher education shall submit an application to the Secretary of Higher Education, in accordance with application procedures and requirements prescribed by the secretary. A grant application shall include a complete description of the institution's specific plans and objectives for the use of the grant funds and any other information specified by the secretary.

d. The secretary shall establish selection criteria for the awarding of grant funds under the program. The secretary shall establish the amount for each grant that is approved.

3. a. There is created within the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education a fund to be known as the "College Mental Health Services Grant Fund." The fund shall be used to provide grants to New Jersey public institutions of higher education under the "College Mental Health Services Grant Program" established

pursuant to section 2 of this act.

b. The fund shall annually be credited with moneys appropriated by the State, any moneys received by the State from corporate donors or other private sector support, and any federal funds which may become available for higher education and mental health services and supports purposes.

4. Beginning with the first full academic year following the date of enactment, a public institution of higher education shall provide for public inspection on its Internet website information on:

a. the total number of students enrolled in the institution who committed suicide;

b. the total number of students enrolled in the institution who attempted to commit suicide;

c. the ratio of students to mental health professionals at the institution;

d. the total number of students who had appointments with a mental health professional at the institution;

e. the number of students who had only one appointment with a mental health professional at the institution;

f. the number of students who had three or more appointments with a mental health professional at the institution;

g. the total number of appointments made by students with mental health professionals at the institution;

h. the average number of appointments for those students who had more than one appointment with a mental health professional at the institution;

i. the average wait time for students to meet with a mental health professional at the institution;

j. the number of students who were referred to outside mental health services; and

k. the number of students who were referred to emergency care due to mental health concerns.

The information required pursuant to this section shall be recorded for each semester and shall be posted no more than 60 days following the end of each semester. The information shall be posted on the institution's Internet website in a prominent and easily accessible location.

5. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill, known as the "College Mental Health Services Act," establishes in the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education the "College Mental Health Services Grant Program." The purpose of the program will be to allocate grant moneys to senior public

institutions of higher education and county colleges in the State to establish or improve access to mental health services on the campuses of the institutions.

A grant received by a public institution of higher education under the program is to be specifically used for efforts to improve student access to, and the timeliness of the provision of, mental health services and supports. The grant may be used for, but is not limited to: developing initiatives to reduce wait times for students seeking mental health services and supports; hiring additional mental health professionals to provide mental health services and supports to students at the institution; contracting with independent public or private entities to provide mental health services and supports; creating methods to enhance the identification of students who may be experiencing personal, school, or family difficulties impacting the student's mental health; and implementing efforts to increase awareness among students of existing on-campus and community resources for students experiencing mental health difficulties.

The bill also requires public institutions of higher education to post on their Internet websites the following information for each semester: the total number of students enrolled in the institution who committed suicide; the total number of students who attempted to commit suicide; the ratio of students to mental health professionals at the institution; the total number of students who had appointments with a mental health professional at the institution; the number of students who had only one appointment with a mental health professional; the number of students who had three or more appointments with a mental health professional; the total number of appointments made by students with mental health professionals; the average number of appointments for those students who had more than one appointment with a mental health professional; the average wait time for students to receive appointments with a mental health professional; the number of students who were referred to outside mental health services; and the number of students who were referred to emergency care due to mental health concerns. The information will be updated no more than 60 days following the end of each semester and will be posted on the institution's website.

The demand and need for mental health services and supports by students on college campuses has increased significantly in recent years. The grant program established under this bill seeks to help public institutions of higher education in the State that may be facing challenges in providing a sufficient level of mental health services and supports to their students. In addition, the bill's provisions requiring a public institution of higher education to provide information regarding mental health treatment and student suicides will help raise awareness of, and provide insight into, the critical issue of mental health on college campuses.