

SENATE, No. 1813

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 24, 2020

Sponsored by:

Senator M. TERESA RUIZ

District 29 (Essex)

SYNOPSIS

Requires DOH to encourage health care facilities and licensed health care professionals to develop a “Reach Out and Read Program.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **AN ACT** concerning health care facilities and licensed health care
2 professionals and supplementing Title 26 of the Revised Statutes

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

6
7 1. a. The Department of Health shall encourage health care
8 facilities, pediatricians, family practice physicians, and other health
9 care professionals in private practice licensed pursuant to Title 45
10 of the Revised Statutes to implement a “Reach Out and Read
11 Program.” The program shall be based on the national Reach Out
12 and Read Program that promotes early literacy anticipatory
13 guidance from health care professionals to parents of children
14 between six months and five years of age, as part of a well-child
15 visit.

16 The purpose of the program shall be to:

17 (1) encourage parents to participate in developmentally
18 appropriate shared-reading activities with their children;

19 (2) develop a child’s language, social, and emotional skills;

20 (3) enhance parent-child relationships;

21 (4) offer pediatricians, family practice physicians, and other
22 licensed health care professionals with tools to monitor a child’s
23 health and well-being; and

24 (5) facilitate the sharing of information between parents and
25 pediatricians, family practice physicians, and other licensed health
26 care professionals on topics relating to child rearing and early
27 childhood development.

28 b. The department shall assist health care facilities,
29 pediatricians, family practice physicians, and other licensed health
30 care professionals in implementing a “Reach Out and Read
31 Program” by:

32 (1) preparing and making available for distribution, both in print
33 and in easily printable format on the department's Internet website,
34 information on the national Reach Out and Read Program; and

35 (2) posting in a prominent location on its Internet website a link
36 to the online application to become a Reach Out and Read Program
37 site.

38 c. As used in this act, “health care facility” means a health care
39 facility licensed by the Department of Health pursuant to P.L.1971,
40 c.136 (C.26:2H-1 et seq.), including, but not limited to, a general
41 hospital, special hospital, public health center, maternity hospital,
42 or birthing facility.

43
44 2. This act shall take effect on the first day of the third month
45 next following the date of enactment.

STATEMENT

This bill requires the Department of Health (DOH) to encourage health care facilities, pediatricians, family practice physicians, and other health care professionals in private practice licensed pursuant to Title 45 of the Revised Statutes to implement a “Reach Out and Read Program.” The program would be based on the national Reach Out and Read Program that promotes early literacy anticipatory guidance from health care professionals to parents of children between six months and five years of age, as part of a well-child visit.

The purpose of the program would be to: encourage parents to participate in developmentally appropriate shared-reading activities with their children; develop a child’s language, social, and emotional skills; enhance parent-child relationships; offer pediatricians, family practice physicians, and other licensed health care professionals with tools to monitor a child’s health and well-being; and facilitate the sharing of information between parents and pediatricians, family practice physicians, and other licensed health care professionals on topics relating to child rearing and early childhood development.

Specifically, DOH would assist health care facilities, pediatricians, family practice physicians, and other licensed health care professionals in implementing a “Reach Out and Read Program” by: preparing and making available for distribution, both in print and in easily printable format on the department’s Internet website, information on the national Reach Out and Read Program; and posting in a prominent location on its Internet website a link to the online application to become a Reach Out and Read program site.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that pediatric providers promote early literary development for children beginning in infancy and continuing through kindergarten. The Reach Out and Read Program is an evidenced-based intervention that proves the integration of literacy promotion as part of a pediatric primary care practice can stimulate optimal patterns of brain development, strengthen parent-child relationships, and build a child’s early language and literacy skills.

This bill would require DOH to encourage health care facilities and licensed health care professionals in this State to implement a program that has been shown to improve children’s language development and has led to increases in both receptive and expressive language scores.