SENATE, No. 2554

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 8, 2020

Sponsored by:
Senator KRISTIN M. CORRADO
District 40 (Bergen, Essex, Morris and Passaic)
Senator SANDRA B. CUNNINGHAM
District 31 (Hudson)

Co-Sponsored by:
Senator Pou

SYNOPSIS

Provides that institutions of higher education may permit final-year students in graduate degree programs for mental health care professions to graduate or be matched with residency or clinical programs early.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/21/2020)

AN ACT concerning the demand for mental health care professionals as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

1. Notwithstanding any law or regulation to the contrary, for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 academic years, an institution of higher education, at its discretion, may permit a final-year student in a graduate degree program leading to a degree as a mental health care professional to graduate early or to be matched with a residency or clinical program early.

As used in this section, "mental health care professional" means a licensed psychiatrist, psychologist, professional counselor, clinical social worker, marriage and family therapist, or any other individual licensed or certified by this State to provide or administer mental health care in the ordinary course of business or practice of a profession.

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

The COVID-19 pandemic is causing a national mental health crisis. In order to help address this situation, this bill provides that for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 academic years, institutions of higher education, at their discretion, may permit final-year students in graduate degree programs leading to a degree as a mental health care professional to graduate early or to be matched with a residency or clinical program early. The bill defines a "mental health care professional" as a licensed psychiatrist, psychologist, professional counselor, clinical social worker, marriage and family therapist, or any other individual licensed or certified to provide or administer mental health care in the ordinary course of business or practice of a profession.

This bill will help to more rapidly expand the number of mental health care providers ready to address the critical mental health needs that have developed as a result of the pandemic.