SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR CITIZENS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 3815

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 10, 2021

The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 3815.

As amended by this committee, this bill requires the Office of the Chief State Medical Examiner (Office) to contract with an appropriate entity to conduct a feasibility study related to addressing the needs and enhancing the operations of the Office in the southern region of the State.

Specifically, the feasibility study will examine:

(1) the development of a regional Chief State Medical Examiner Office facility in the southern region of the State, including an assessment of: the anticipated need for a regional facility; the size of facility that would be needed to meet regional needs, including the size of the physical plant and anticipated staffing needs; the advantages and disadvantages of establishing morgue facilities and administrative offices in a single location; the advantages and disadvantages of constructing a new facility as opposed to adapting an existing facility for this purpose; the costs of acquiring and maintaining a computerized tomography scanner; and the advantages and disadvantages of accommodating on-site forensic testing services, as well as partnering with one or more institutions of higher education to facilitate data collection and research with the goal of informing public health policy and

(2) collaboration with one or more medical schools operating in the southern region of the State to establish a forensic medical examiner fellowship program, develop a death investigation program for medicolegal investigators and law enforcement, enhance education and training for medical students and medical residents related to forensic medical examination, establish new graduate and undergraduate courses in forensic medical examination, and invest in and expand graduate and undergraduate courses in the forensic sciences in New Jersey institutions of higher education.

The feasibility study is to additionally include recommendations for legislation, administrative action, or other governmental action that

may be needed to implement any recommendations included in the report of the feasibility study. The Office will be required to transmit a copy of the report of the feasibility study to the Governor and to the Legislature.

The bill appropriates the sum of $40,000 to the Office from the General Fund for the purposes of contracting with an appropriate entity to conduct the feasibility study required under the bill.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments provide that the feasibility study will include an assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of accommodating on-site forensic testing services, as well as partnering with one or more institutions of higher education to facilitate data collection and research with the goal of informing public health policy.

The committee amendments provide that the feasibility study will examine collaboration with one or more medical schools operating in the southern region of the State to also invest in and expand graduate and undergraduate courses in the forensic sciences in New Jersey institutions of higher education.

The committee amendments make technical changes to reflect the amendments and to address grammatical issues.