

SENATE, No. 2444

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
213th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED DECEMBER 15, 2008

Sponsored by:
Senator RICHARD J. CODEY
District 27 (Essex)

SYNOPSIS

Requires Division of Mental Health Services to develop procedures to enable hospitals to promptly transfer emergency department patients with mental illness to appropriate treatment setting.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT concerning mental health services and supplementing Title
2 30 of the Revised Statutes.

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

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7 1. a. The Division of Mental Health Services in the
8 Department of Human Services shall develop the following
9 procedures to enable emergency departments in general hospitals to
10 obtain emergency relief from the division in the case of patients in
11 need of behavioral health services who remain in the emergency
12 department for 24 hours or longer awaiting placement in an
13 appropriate behavioral health setting:

14 (1) designate staff in the division who shall be notified by a
15 general hospital when the hospital has a patient who has been
16 awaiting placement in an appropriate behavioral health setting for
17 24 hours or longer;

18 (2) provide for clinical facilitators who are available 24 hours
19 per day, seven days per week, whose purpose is to review the
20 clinical needs of the patient awaiting placement so that the patient
21 can be transferred to a behavioral health setting that best meets the
22 clinical needs of the patient as determined by the psychiatric team
23 that evaluated the patient;

24 (3) provide for a mechanism that will enable the division to
25 conduct ongoing assessments of patient flow and access to care; and

26 (4) set forth objective criteria for identifying resources that are
27 needed to ensure timely implementation of the procedures required
28 under this subsection.

29 b. The Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Mental
30 Health Services shall establish a mechanism to coordinate its
31 procedures and policies with the Division of Child Behavioral
32 Health in the Department of Children and Families, the Divisions of
33 Developmental Disabilities and Addiction Services in the
34 Department of Human Services, the Department of Corrections, the
35 Department of Health and Senior Services, and such other
36 governmental agencies and task forces that address the needs of
37 consumers of mental health services and their families, as the
38 Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Mental Health Services
39 deems appropriate.

40 c. The assistant commissioner shall consult with the New
41 Jersey Hospital Association, the Hospital Alliance of New Jersey,
42 the New Jersey Council of Teaching Hospitals, and community
43 mental health advocacy organizations in developing the procedures
44 required pursuant to this section. The assistant commissioner shall
45 also seek input for the procedures from Statewide organizations that
46 advocate for persons with mental illness and their families.

47 d. The assistant commissioner shall issue a report of his
48 findings and recommendations, including a summary of the

1 procedures developed pursuant to this section, to the Governor and
2 to the Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens
3 Committee and the Assembly Human Services Committee no later
4 than 12 months after the effective date of this act.

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6 2. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire 18
7 months after the effective date.

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10 STATEMENT

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12 This bill requires the Division of Mental Health Services in the
13 Department of Human Services to develop the following procedures
14 to enable emergency departments in general hospitals to obtain
15 emergency relief from the division in the case of patients in need of
16 behavioral health services who remain in the emergency department
17 for 24 hours or longer awaiting placement in an appropriate
18 behavioral health setting:

19 -- designate staff in the division who shall be notified by a
20 general hospital when the hospital has a patient who has been
21 awaiting placement in an appropriate behavioral health setting
22 for 24 hours or longer;

23 -- provide for clinical facilitators who are available 24 hours per
24 day, seven days per week, whose purpose is to review the
25 clinical needs of the patient awaiting placement so that the
26 patient can be transferred to a behavioral health setting that best
27 meets the clinical needs of the patient as determined by the
28 psychiatric team that evaluated the patient;

29 -- provide for a mechanism that will enable the division to
30 conduct ongoing assessments of patient flow and access to care;
31 and

32 -- set forth objective criteria for identifying resources that are
33 needed to ensure timely implementation of the provisions of the
34 required procedures.

35 In addition, the bill provides as follows:

36 • The Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Mental Health
37 Services shall establish a mechanism to coordinate its procedures
38 and policies with the Division of Child Behavioral Health in the
39 Department of Children and Families, the Divisions of
40 Developmental Disabilities and Addiction Services in the
41 Department of Human Services, the Department of Corrections,
42 the Department of Health and Senior Services, and such other
43 governmental agencies and task forces that address the needs of
44 consumers of mental health services and their families, as the
45 assistant commissioner deems appropriate.

46 • The assistant commissioner shall consult with the New Jersey
47 Hospital Association, the Hospital Alliance of New Jersey, the
48 New Jersey Council of Teaching Hospitals, and community

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- 1 mental health advocacy organizations in developing the
2 procedures required pursuant to this bill. The assistant
3 commissioner shall also seek input for the procedures from
4 Statewide organizations that advocate for persons with mental
5 illness and their families.
- 6 • The assistant commissioner shall issue a report of his findings
7 and recommendations, including a summary of the procedures
8 developed pursuant to this bill, to the Governor and to the Senate
9 Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee and the
10 Assembly Human Services Committee no later than 12 months
11 after the effective date of this bill.