SYNOPSIS

Requires DHS to establish standardized admission protocols and medical clearance criteria for admission to State or county psychiatric hospital or short-term care facility.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.
AN ACT concerning admission to certain psychiatric facilities and
supplementing Title 30 of the Revised Statutes.

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

1. a. The Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Mental
Health Services in the Department of Human Services, in
consultation with the New Jersey Hospital Association, the Hospital
Alliance of New Jersey, the New Jersey Council of Teaching
Hospitals, the New Jersey Chapter of the American College of
Emergency Physicians, and the New Jersey Psychiatric Association,
shall develop standardized admission protocols and medical
clearance criteria for transfer or admission of a hospital emergency
department patient to a State or county psychiatric hospital or a
short-term care facility.

The standardized admission protocols shall include, but not be
limited to, the following elements:

(1) routine laboratory and diagnostic tests, based on nationally
recognized standards of care, for patients whose clinical
presentation warrant such testing. The assigned physician at the
psychiatric hospital or facility shall not be permitted to request
additional tests on the basis of an abnormal value; however, the
examining physician in the emergency department may order
follow-up tests that may be necessary in the clinical judgment of the
examining physician. If there is a clinical disagreement between
the examining physician at the emergency department and the
assigned physician at the psychiatric hospital or facility, the
physicians shall engage in direct physician-to-physician
communication to resolve the disagreement;

(2) a medical clearance checklist form for transfer or admission
to a State or county psychiatric hospital or a short-term care facility,
including contraindications for admission to a State or county
psychiatric hospital or short-term care facility;

(3) guidelines for emergency medical services personnel when
there is a delay in accepting patients at the receiving State or county
psychiatric hospital or short-term care facility once patient transport
has begun;

(4) procedures for requesting a transfer of a patient to a State or
county psychiatric hospital or short-term care facility by emergency
department personnel and procedures for accepting a transfer of a
patient by a State or county psychiatric hospital or short-term care
facility;

(5) procedures to contact the designated State or county
psychiatric hospital or short-term care facility physician who is
responsible for coordinating medical clearance of a patient, on a 24-
hours per day, seven-days-a-week basis; and
(6) a mechanism for training emergency department hospital staff, screening center staff, State and county psychiatric hospital staff, short-term care facility staff, and emergency medical services staff in the standardized admission protocols established pursuant to this section.

b. The assistant commissioner shall collect data from the hospital emergency departments and State and county psychiatric hospitals and short-term care facilities regarding the protocols established pursuant to this section and evaluate the effectiveness of the protocols on patient care one year after their implementation.

2. The Commissioner of Human Services shall, in accordance with the “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), adopt such rules and regulations as the commissioner deems necessary to carry out the provisions of this act.

3. This act shall take effect on the 90th day after enactment, but the Commissioner of Human Services may take such anticipatory administrative action in advance thereof as shall be necessary for the implementation of this act.

STATEMENT

This bill requires the Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Mental Health Services, in consultation with the New Jersey Hospital Association, the Hospital Alliance of New Jersey, the New Jersey Council of Teaching Hospitals, the New Jersey Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians, and the New Jersey Psychiatric Association, to develop standardized admission protocols and medical clearance criteria for transfer or admission of a hospital emergency department patient to a State or county psychiatric hospital or short-term care facility.

The standardized admission protocols shall include, but not be limited to, the following elements:

- routine laboratory and diagnostic tests, based on nationally recognized standards of care, for patients whose clinical presentation warrant such testing. The assigned physician at the psychiatric hospital or facility shall not be permitted to request additional tests on the basis of an abnormal value; however, the examining physician in the emergency department may order any follow-up tests that may be necessary in the clinical judgment of the examining physician.

If there is a clinical disagreement between the examining physician at the emergency department and the assigned physician at the psychiatric hospital or facility, the physicians
shall engage in direct physician-to-physician communication
to resolve the disagreement;

- a medical clearance checklist form for transfer or admission to
  a State or county psychiatric hospital or short-term care
  facility, including contraindications for admission to a State or
  county psychiatric hospital or short-term care facility;

- guidelines for emergency medical services personnel when
  there is a delay in accepting patients at the receiving State or
  county psychiatric hospital or short-term care facility once
  patient transport has begun;

- procedures for requesting a transfer of a patient to a State or
  county psychiatric hospital or short-term care facility by
  emergency department personnel and procedures for accepting
  a transfer of a patient by a State or county psychiatric hospital
  or short-term care facility;

- procedures to contact the designated State or county
  psychiatric hospital or short-term care facility physician who is
  responsible for coordinating medical clearance of a patient, on
  a 24-hours per day, seven-days-a-week basis; and

- a mechanism for training emergency department hospital staff,
  screening center staff, State and county psychiatric hospital
  staff, short-term care facility staff, and emergency medical
  services staff in the standardized admission protocols
  established pursuant to this bill.

The bill also requires the assistant commissioner to collect data
from the hospital emergency departments and State and county
psychiatric hospitals and short-term care facilities regarding the
protocols established pursuant to this bill and evaluate the
effectiveness of the protocols on patient care one year after their
implementation.

The bill takes effect on the 90th day after enactment, but the
Commissioner of Human Services is authorized to take such
anticipatory administrative action in advance thereof as shall be
necessary for its implementation.