SENATE, No. 1761

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 28, 2022

Sponsored by:
Senator ANTHONY M. BUCCO
District 25 (Morris and Somerset)

SYNOPSIS
Requires health care facilities to screen health care workers and first responders for symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder related to COVID-19 pandemic.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
As introduced.
AN ACT concerning post-traumatic stress disorder and supplementing Title 26 of the Revised Statutes.

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

1. a. Health care facilities licensed pursuant to P.L.1971, c.136 (C.26:2H-1 et seq.) shall establish procedures to screen health care workers and first responders, upon intake for inpatient or outpatient services, for the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder related to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Each facility shall implement measures to avoid performing redundant screenings on a given health care worker or first responder, both at the same facility and at other facilities in the State, unless the individual requests a subsequent screening or a subsequent screening appears to be clinically appropriate. Health care workers and first responders presenting at a facility for health care services shall have the right to refuse to be screened for the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the event a health care worker or first responder screens positive for the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the facility shall offer to assist the individual with referrals to appropriate treatment resources and shall provide the individual with a link to the informational resources published on the Internet website of the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services in the Department of Human Services pursuant to subsection c. of this section.

b. Health care facilities employing health care workers or first responders who provided services in response to the COVID-19 pandemic or who provided essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic shall ensure that those health care workers and first responders are provided with information about the resources that are available concerning post-traumatic stress disorder related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including, but not limited to, employee assistance programs and a link to the informational resources published on the Internet website of the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services in the Department of Human Services pursuant to subsection c. of this section.

c. The Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services in the Department of Human Services, in consultation with the Department of Health, shall:

(1) identify or develop a screening tool for post-traumatic stress disorder related to the COVID-19 pandemic, along with guidance concerning the use of the screening tool, for use by health care facilities for the purposes of conducting screenings pursuant to subsection a. of this section;

(2) publish on the division’s Internet website information and a list of available resources related to treatment for post-traumatic
stress disorder, including links to appropriate third-party resource
providers, for use by health care facilities in connection with
subsections a. and b. of this section; and
(3) provide such other resources and implement such other
programs and initiatives as the division determines to be
appropriate to meet the clinical needs of health care workers and
first responders experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder related
to the COVID-19 pandemic.
d. The Department of Health shall include on its Internet
website a link to the informational resources published on the
Internet website of the Division of Mental Health and Addiction
Services in the Department of Human Services pursuant to
subsection c. of this section.

2. This act shall take effect 60 days after the date of enactment.

STATEMENT

This bill requires health care facilities to establish procedures to
screen health care workers and first responders, upon intake for
inpatient or outpatient services, for the symptoms of post-traumatic
stress disorder (PTSD) related to the coronavirus disease 2019
(COVID-19) pandemic. Each facility is to implement measures to
avoid performing redundant screenings on a given health care
worker or first responder, both at that facility and at other facilities
throughout the State, unless the individual requests a subsequent
screening or a subsequent screening appears to be clinically
appropriate. Health care workers and first responders will have the
right to refuse to be screened for the symptoms of PTSD related to
the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the event a health care worker or first responder screens
positive for the symptoms of PTSD related to the COVID-19
pandemic, the facility will be required to offer to assist the
individual with referrals to appropriate treatment resources and a
link to informational resources that are required to published on the
Internet website of the Division of Mental Health and Addiction
Services (DMHAS) in the Department of Human Services under the
bill.

The DMHAS, in consultation with the Department of Health,
will be required to identify or develop a PTSD screening tool, along
with guidance concerning the use of the screening tool, for use by
health care facilities in complying with the requirements of the bill.
In addition, the DMHAS is to provide other resources and
implement other programs and initiatives as it deems appropriate to
meet the clinical needs of health care workers and first responders
experiencing PTSD related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The
Department of Health will be required to post a link to the DMHAS informational resource page on the department’s Internet website. The bill additionally requires health care facilities employing health care workers or first responders who provided services in response to the COVID-19 pandemic or who provided essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that those health care workers and first responders are provided with information concerning available resources and services for PTSD related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including, but not limited to, employee assistance programs and a link to the DMHAS informational resource page.