

ASSEMBLY OVERSIGHT, REFORM AND FEDERAL
RELATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
ASSEMBLY, No. 3975

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 13, 2024

The Assembly Oversight, Reform and Federal Relations Committee reports favorably an Assembly Committee Substitute for Assembly Bill No. 3975.

The bill incorporates peer recovery specialists into current law and authorizes the Director of the Division of Consumer Affairs, in the Department of Law and Public Safety, to oversee the regulation of the specialists. As defined in the bill, a peer recovery specialist is an individual who provides services as a result of lived experience to other individuals struggling with substance use disorder or mental health problems. The director is to establish, among other items, the requirements to qualify as a peer recovery specialist.

Additionally, the bill prohibits specialists from: (1) engaging in professional relationships or commitments that conflict with family members, friends, close associates, or others whose welfare might be jeopardized by that relationship or commitment; (2) exploiting peer relationships with current or former peers for personal gain, including social or business relationships; and (3) accepting as peers for recovery wellness services anyone with whom the peer recovery specialist has engaged in a personal relationship, including any family members or spouses. Moreover, an individual may only provide services as a peer recovery specialist and hold themselves out as a specialist if approved by the director.

The bill does not inhibit (1) an individual's ability to provide self-help, sponsorship through support groups, or other uncompensated counseling assistance; (2) activities and services of a designated employee or agent of a private employer who is to be involved in the evaluation or referral for counseling of employees; (3) clergy when engaging in ministerial duties; (4) activities of trainees or interns pursuing a course of study in counseling; and (5) services provided by individuals as part of the scope of practice of the individual's profession.