

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 4434

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 20, 2024

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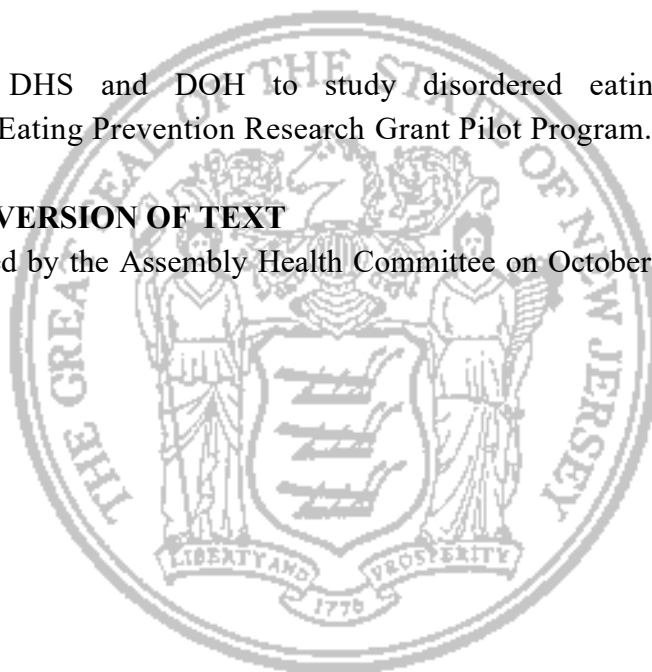
Assemblyman Wimberly, Senators McKnight and Timberlake

SYNOPSIS

Requires DHS and DOH to study disordered eating; establishes “Disordered Eating Prevention Research Grant Pilot Program.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Assembly Health Committee on October 17, 2024, with amendments.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/12/2026)

1 AN ACT concerning disordered eating and supplementing Title 26
2 of the Revised Statutes ¹[, and making an appropriation]¹.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

8 a. Eating Disorders are increasingly recognized as a leading
9 cause of morbidity and mortality, with 10,200 deaths per year
10 attributed to an eating disorder in the United States;

11 b. According to the Strategic Training Initiative for the
12 Prevention of Eating Disorders, in New Jersey, nine percent of
13 residents, or more than three-quarters of a million people, will have
14 an eating disorder in their lifetime;

15 c. People of color; lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender
16 individuals; youth; and older residents are more likely to suffer
17 from an eating disorder, but less likely to receive eating disorder
18 treatment, creating a disproportionate gap in eating disorder
19 prevention and care;

20 d. There is limited State-specific research on disordered eating
21 and its impact on the residents of New Jersey; and

22 e. It is fitting and proper for the State to focus on developing
23 research and resources to educate residents on the severity of
24 disordered eating, to prevent disordered eating in New Jersey, and
25 to support residents who develop disordered eating – with a
26 recognition that disordered eating disproportionately harms and
27 increases the mortality rates of people of color; lesbian gay,
28 bisexual, or transgender individuals; youth; and older residents.

29
30 2. As used in this act:

31 “Disordered eating” means a range of irregular eating behaviors
32 that may or may not warrant diagnosis of a specific eating disorder.

33 ¹["Office of Disordered Eating Prevention" or "office" means
34 the Office of Disordered Eating Prevention established pursuant to
35 section 3 of this act.]¹

36 “Disordered Eating Prevention Research Grant ¹Pilot¹ Program”
37 or “grant program” means the Disordered Eating Prevention
38 Research Grant ¹Pilot¹ Program established pursuant to section 4 of
39 this act.

40 ¹“Division” means the Division of Mental Health and Addiction
41 Services in the Department of Human Services.¹

42 “Eligible applicant” means an individual, nonprofit organization,
43 or for-profit organization, that conducts research on disordered
44 eating and prevention in youth, adults, and older residents or that

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Assembly AHE committee amendments adopted October 17, 2024.

1 serves youth, adults, and older residents who have disordered eating
2 traits.

3 “Grant recipient” means an eligible applicant that the ¹‘[office]
4 division¹ selects to receive money through the grant program.

5

6 3. a. ¹‘[There is hereby established in the Department of Health
7 the Office of Disordered Eating Prevention.] The division and the
8 Department of Health shall conduct a study on the causes,
9 prevention, and reduction of disordered eating in New Jersey.

10 b. Within 18 months following the effective date of this act, the
11 Commissioner of Human Services and the Commissioner of Health
12 shall prepare and submit to the Governor and, pursuant to section 2
13 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the Legislature, a report
14 containing the study's findings and recommendations.¹

15 ¹‘[b.] c.¹ The ¹‘[office, at a minimum, shall] study shall
16 include, but shall not be limited to¹:

17 (1) ¹‘[create and maintain an external-facing resource that is
18 updated annually and includes] determining¹ key information about
19 disordered eating, including risk factors and preventing factors ¹‘[.
20 The resource shall be culturally sensitive and, when possible,
21 available in English, Spanish, and any other language determined
22 necessary by the Commissioner of Health]’¹;

23 (2) ¹‘[collaborate with other State mental health programs and
24 offices to align work focused on disordered eating,] identifying
25 gaps in treatment for disordered eating;

26 (3) evaluating prevention strategies, including dismantling
27 discrimination and bias with regard to weight; and

28 (4) making recommendations to¹ facilitate public outreach, and
29 increase awareness regarding disordered eating prevention, with a
30 focus on impacted communities, such as youth, older residents,
31 people of color, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender
32 individuals¹’;

33 (3) partner with the Department of Education to inform teachers,
34 administrators, school staff, students, and parents on disorder eating
35 prevention; and

36 (4) administer the Disordered Eating Prevention Research Grant
37 Program]’¹.

38 ¹‘[c.] d.¹ The ¹‘[office] division¹ may:

39 (1) contract with a third party to conduct focus groups,
40 interview key individuals, conduct surveys, and establish a
41 collaborative group to discuss key issues regarding disordered
42 eating prevention;

43 (2) partner with the ¹‘[Division of Mental Health and Addiction
44 Services in the Department of Human Services to identify
45 disordered eating prevention strategies, including dismantling
46 discrimination and bias with regard to weight] Department of

1 Education to inform teachers, administrators, school staff, students,
2 and parents on disorder eating prevention¹; and

3 (3) seek, accept, and expend gifts, grants, or donations from
4 private or public sources for the purpose of this act.

5
6 4. a. There is hereby established ¹~~the~~ a three-year¹
7 Disordered Eating Prevention Research Grant ¹Pilot¹ Program
8 within the ¹~~Office of Disordered Eating Prevention~~ division¹.
9 This grant program shall provide financial assistance to eligible
10 applicants to conduct research on ¹or research related to barriers to
11 and gaps within the treatment of disordered eating;¹ the root causes
12 of disordered eating¹; and ¹~~to examine~~¹ the risk factors and
13 protective factors for disordered eating in youth, adults, and older
14 residents.

15 b. The ¹~~Office of Disordered Eating Prevention~~ division¹
16 shall administer the grant program and shall adopt guidelines for the
17 grant program, which guidelines shall include:

18 (1) application procedures by which eligible applicants may
19 apply for a grant;

20 (2) criteria to use in selecting eligible applicants to receive grant
21 money and to determine the amount of grant money to be awarded
22 to each grant recipient, according to the availability of resources for
23 the grant program;

24 (3) procedures for administering the grant program, including
25 establishment of the dates the ¹~~office~~ division¹ will announce the
26 grant program, begin accepting applications, allow eligible
27 applicants to submit applications, and begin distributing money to
28 the grantees; and

29 (4) reporting procedures for grant recipients.

30 c. Each grant recipient shall submit a written report to the
31 ¹~~office~~ division¹, which report shall include a summary of the
32 research made possible with the grant award.

33

34 5. Commencing one year after the effective date of this act, and
35 annually thereafter, the ¹~~Office of Disordered Eating Prevention~~ division¹
36 shall submit to the Governor and, pursuant to section 2 of
37 P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the Legislature, a report that
38 summarizes the ¹~~office's~~ activities regarding the implementation
39 of this act. The report shall include:

40 a. the¹ following information regarding the administration of
41 ¹~~the~~ Disordered Eating Prevention Research Grant ¹Pilot¹ Program
42 ¹~~during the preceding year~~¹:

43 ¹a.¹ the number of grant recipients;

44 ¹b.¹ the amount of each grant award to each grant recipient; and

1 ¹c.¹ a summary of each grant recipient's written report, as
2 required to be submitted to the ¹**office** division¹ pursuant to
3 subsection c. of section 4 of this act ¹**;** and

4 b. any findings and recommendations the office has to improve
5 disordered eating prevention in the State;¹ **]**¹

6
7 ¹**[**6. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the
8 Department of Health such amounts as are necessary, as determined
9 by the Commissioner of Health, to implement the provisions of this
10 act.¹**]**¹

11
12 ¹**[**7.¹ 6.¹ This act shall take effect immediately ¹and shall
13 expire three years thereafter¹.