

**SENATE, No. 4093**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

**221st LEGISLATURE**

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 3, 2025

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator CARMEN F. AMATO, JR.**

**District 9 (Ocean)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Requires regional diagnostic and treatment center for child abuse and neglect to establish mobile team to respond to certain hospital requests to perform forensic child abuse examinations.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



S4093 AMATO

2

1 AN ACT concerning hospital-based investigations of child abuse and  
2 neglect, amending P.L.1998, c.19, and supplementing Title 9 of  
3 the Revised Statutes.

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

7  
8 1. Section 2 of P.L.1998, c.19 (C.9:6-8.100) is amended to read  
9 as follows:

10 2. Each center shall demonstrate a multidisciplinary approach  
11 to identifying and responding to child abuse and neglect. The  
12 center staff shall include, at a minimum, a pediatrician, a consulting  
13 psychiatrist, a psychologist and a social worker who are trained to  
14 evaluate and treat children who have been abused or neglected and  
15 their families. Each center shall establish a liaison with the district  
16 office of the Division of Child Protection and Permanency in the  
17 Department of Children and Families and the prosecutor's office  
18 from the county in which the child who is undergoing evaluation  
19 and treatment resides. At least one member of the staff shall also  
20 have an appropriate professional credential or significant training  
21 and experience in the identification and treatment of substance use  
22 disorder.

23 Each center shall establish a mobile team of multidisciplinary  
24 professionals, which team shall be available 24 hours a day, 365  
25 days of the year, to respond to a hospital's request, made in  
26 accordance with subsection a. of section 3 of P.L. , c. (C. )  
27 (pending before the Legislature as this bill), to perform a forensic  
28 child abuse examination on a pediatric patient. A forensic child  
29 abuse examination requested by a hospital under this section shall  
30 be performed by the mobile team at the requesting hospital. The  
31 Commissioner of Children and Families, in consultation with the  
32 New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect, shall  
33 determine the number and types of staff required to compose a  
34 center's mobile team.

35 Each center shall develop: an intake, referral and case tracking  
36 process which assists the division and prosecutor's office in  
37 assuring that child victims receive appropriate and timely diagnostic  
38 and treatment services; and a method by which a hospital may  
39 contact the center associated with the county in which the hospital  
40 is located to request, 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year, a  
41 forensic child abuse examination of a pediatric patient by the  
42 center's mobile team.

43 (cf: P.L.2023, c.177, s.22)

**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.

S4093 AMATO

1       2. Section 3 of P.L.1998, c.19 (C.9:6-8.101) is amended to read  
2 as follows:

3       3. The regional centers shall: evaluate and treat child abuse and  
4 neglect; be resources for the region and develop additional  
5 resources within the region; provide training and consultative  
6 services; upon the request of a hospital, made in accordance with  
7 subsection a. of section 3 of P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before  
8 the Legislature as this bill), dispatch a mobile team to the  
9 requesting hospital to perform a forensic child abuse examination of  
10 a pediatric patient; and be available for emergency phone  
11 consultation 24 hours a day. The centers shall also be a source for  
12 research and training for additional medical and mental health  
13 personnel dedicated to the identification and treatment of child  
14 abuse and neglect.

15       The regional center may charge a sliding scale fee for services  
16 provided under this act.

17 (cf: P.L.1998, c.19, s.3)

18

19       3. (New section) a. Notwithstanding any State law or  
20 regulation to the contrary, a hospital licensed in the State shall be  
21 required to contact the regional diagnostic and treatment center for  
22 child abuse and neglect, as established pursuant to P.L.1998, c.19  
23 (C.9:6-8.99 et seq.), associated with the county in which the  
24 hospital is located and request a forensic child abuse evaluation of a  
25 pediatric patient, to be performed at the hospital by the center's  
26 mobile team, if:

27       (1) the patient is under the age of 13; the patient has been  
28 referred to the hospital by a school nurse, pediatrician, health care  
29 provider, parent, or relative for an investigation of suspected child  
30 abuse or neglect; and the patient's alleged perpetrator of abuse or  
31 neglect is a caregiver; or

32       (2) the patient is under the age of 13; the patient presents with  
33 any injury that is inconsistent with any account provided describing  
34 the circumstances that led to that injury or with the activity typical  
35 for the developmental level of that child; and the patient's alleged  
36 perpetrator of abuse or neglect is a caregiver.

37       b. A hospital licensed in the State shall be required to ensure  
38 that all hospital emergency department staff participate in a training  
39 program, selected by Department of Children and Families in  
40 consultation with the Attorney General, regarding the identification  
41 and reporting of diagnosed or suspected cases of child abuse or  
42 neglect. Emergency department staff shall be required to  
43 participate in the training program upon the commencement of  
44 employment in the hospital emergency department, and annually  
45 thereafter.

46

47       4. (New section) There is appropriated from the General Fund  
48 to the Department of Children and Families, for distribution to the

1 State's regional diagnostic and treatment centers for child abuse and  
2 neglect, as established pursuant to P.L.1998, c.19 (C.9:6-8.99 et  
3 seq.), such sums as deemed necessary by the Commissioner of  
4 Children and Families to effectuate the provisions of this act  
5 regarding the establishment of a mobile team by each center.

6  
7 5. This act shall take effect 180 days after the date of  
8 enactment, except that the Commissioner of Children and Families  
9 may take any anticipatory administrative action in advance as may  
10 be necessary to implement the provisions of this act.

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13 STATEMENT

14  
15 This bill requires a regional diagnostic and treatment center for  
16 child abuse and neglect to establish a mobile team to respond to  
17 certain hospital requests to perform forensic child abuse  
18 examinations on pediatric patients. The bill also appropriates State  
19 funds to support the establishment of the mobile teams. Currently,  
20 pursuant to State law, there are four such State-designated  
21 multidisciplinary centers designed to support the evaluation and  
22 treatment of abused and neglected children within a specific county-  
23 based region of the State. Services provided by these centers are  
24 largely center-based.

25 Under the bill, each center is required to establish a mobile team  
26 of multidisciplinary professionals. The team is to be available 24  
27 hours a day, 365 days of the year, to respond to a hospital's request,  
28 made in accordance with the provisions of the bill, to perform a  
29 forensic child abuse examination on a pediatric patient at the  
30 requesting hospital. Each center is also to develop a method by  
31 which a hospital may contact the center's mobile team to make a  
32 request for services. The bill provides that the Commissioner of  
33 Children and Families, in consultation with the New Jersey Task  
34 Force on Child Abuse and Neglect, is to determine the number and  
35 types of staff required to compose a center's mobile team.

36 The bill mandates that a hospital licensed in the State is to  
37 contact the center associated with the county in which the hospital  
38 is located and request a forensic child abuse evaluation of a  
39 pediatric patient, to be performed at the hospital by the center's  
40 mobile team, if:

41 1) the patient is under the age of 13; the patient has been  
42 referred to the hospital by a school nurse, pediatrician, health care  
43 provider, parent, or relative for an investigation of suspected child  
44 abuse or neglect; and the patient's alleged perpetrator of abuse or  
45 neglect is a caregiver; or

46 2) the patient is under the age of 13; the patient presents with  
47 any injury that is inconsistent with any account provided describing  
48 the circumstances that led to that injury or with the activity typical

**S4093 AMATO**

1 for the developmental level of that child; and the patient's alleged  
2 perpetrator of abuse or neglect is a caregiver.

3 The bill also requires hospitals to ensure that all emergency  
4 department staff participate in an annual training program, selected  
5 by Department of Children and Families in consultation with the  
6 Attorney General, regarding the identification and reporting of  
7 diagnosed or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. This  
8 provision codifies an existing requirement at N.J.A.C.8:43G-2.13,  
9 which directs hospitals to provide identical training to appropriate  
10 persons.