

**SENATE, No. 964**

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**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**218th LEGISLATURE**

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INTRODUCED JANUARY 16, 2018

**Sponsored by:**  
**Senator JOSEPH F. VITALE**  
**District 19 (Middlesex)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Establishes Behavioral Health Services Task Force.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



1 AN ACT establishing a task force to study and make  
2 recommendations regarding the provision of behavioral health  
3 care services.

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

7  
8 1. a. There is established in the Division of Mental Health and  
9 Addiction Services in the Department of Health the Behavioral Health  
10 Services Task Force.

11 b. The purpose of the task force shall be to review and analyze the  
12 structure and delivery of behavioral health services in New Jersey and  
13 make recommendations for legislation or other such action as it deems  
14 appropriate with regard to improving, expanding, and facilitating the  
15 provision of behavioral health services to the citizens of this State.  
16 Behavioral health services reviewed and analyzed by the task force  
17 shall include both services for individuals with mental health concerns  
18 and substance use disorder.

19 c. The task force shall consist of 26 members who are selected to  
20 represent a geographically diverse representation of New Jersey, as  
21 follows:

22 (1) the Commissioners of Health, Human Services, and Children  
23 and Families, or their designees, who shall serve ex officio;

24 (2) Seven public members to be appointed by the Governor, as  
25 follows: one person upon the recommendation of the New Jersey  
26 Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies; one person  
27 upon the recommendation of the National Alliance on Mental Illness  
28 New Jersey; one person upon the recommendation of the Mental  
29 Health Association in New Jersey; one person upon the  
30 recommendation of the New Jersey Hospital Association who  
31 represents an acute care entity; one person upon the recommendation  
32 of the Society of Psychiatric Advanced Practice Nurses of the New  
33 Jersey State Nurses Association; one person upon the recommendation  
34 of the New Jersey Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association; and one  
35 person upon the recommendation of the New Jersey Primary Care  
36 Association;

37 (3) Eight public members to be appointed by the President of the  
38 Senate, as follows: one person upon the recommendation of the New  
39 Jersey Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians; one  
40 person representing a health insurance carrier and one person  
41 representing a Medicaid managed care organization, both upon the  
42 recommendation of the New Jersey Association of Health Plans; one  
43 psychiatrist upon the recommendation of the Medical Society of New  
44 Jersey; one representative of an entity which is designated by the State  
45 to provide screening services, as defined in section 2 of P.L.1987,  
46 c.116 (C.30:4-27.2); one representative of an organization which  
47 works with individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities;  
48 one representative of an organization which works with individuals

1 who have substance use disorder; and one representative of an entity  
2 which provides early intervention support services through a contract  
3 with the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services; and

4 (4) Eight public members to be appointed by the Speaker of the  
5 General Assembly, as follows: one representative of Rutgers  
6 University Behavioral Health Care; one person upon the  
7 recommendation of the New Jersey Hospital Association; one  
8 representative of the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers; one  
9 person upon the recommendation of the Advocates for Children of  
10 New Jersey; one representative of an outpatient treatment provider;  
11 one representative of an entity that provides community social  
12 services; one person upon the recommendation of the New Jersey  
13 Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons; and one health  
14 care provider, upon the recommendation of the New Jersey Chapter of  
15 the American Academy of Pediatrics, who specializes in treating  
16 children and adolescents.

17 d. Vacancies in the membership of the task force shall be filled in  
18 the same manner provided for the original appointments.

19 e. The task force shall organize as soon as practicable following  
20 the appointment of its members, and shall select a chairperson and  
21 vice-chairperson from among the members. The chairperson shall  
22 appoint a secretary who need not be a member of the task force.

23 f. The public members shall serve without compensation, but  
24 shall be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the  
25 performance of their duties and within the limits of funds available to  
26 the task force.

27 g. The task force shall be entitled to call to its assistance and avail  
28 itself of the services of the employees of any State, county, or  
29 municipal department, board, bureau, commission, or agency as it may  
30 require and as may be made available to it for its purposes.

31 h. The Department of Health shall provide staff support to the  
32 task force.

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34 2. a. The duties of the Behavioral Health Services Task Force,  
35 established by section 1 of this act, shall include, but not be limited  
36 to:

37 (1) conducting a survey of the current behavioral health care  
38 system on a county by county basis for acute, short-term, and long-  
39 term care;

40 (2) identifying gaps in the current behavioral health care system  
41 for the delivery of care for children, adolescents, and adults on a  
42 county by county basis for acute, short-term, and long-term care;  
43 and

44 (3) making recommendations to:

45 (a) ensure access to quality emergency behavioral health care in  
46 a timely manner;

47 (b) coordinate services among providers;

- 1 (c) facilitate access to comprehensive behavioral health care and  
2 treatment;
- 3 (d) maximize the effective use of available funding;
- 4 (e) establish new programs or revise existing programs;
- 5 (f) promote enhanced communication and information  
6 exchanges; and
- 7 (g) any other matters the task force deems necessary and  
8 appropriate.
- 9 b. The task force may contract with the Rutgers Center for  
10 State Health Policy, or a similar organization, to conduct the survey  
11 of the current behavioral health care system and to conduct any  
12 other analysis or research the task force anticipates will contribute  
13 to the ability of the task force to fulfill the duties required of it  
14 pursuant to this section.
- 15 c. The task force may solicit and receive grants and other funds  
16 that are made available for the task force's purposes by any  
17 governmental, public, not-for-profit, or for-profit agency, including  
18 funds that are made available under any federal or State law,  
19 regulations, or program.
- 20 d. No later than 18 months following the effective date of this  
21 act, the task force shall report to the Governor, and to the  
22 Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1),  
23 its findings and recommendations, including actionable steps which  
24 can be taken in regard to the provision of behavioral health services  
25 in New Jersey. The task force shall terminate upon submission of  
26 the report.
- 27
- 28 3. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire upon  
29 submission of the task force's report required to be prepared  
30 pursuant to section 2 of this act.
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33 STATEMENT

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35 This bill establishes the Behavioral Health Task Force in the  
36 Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services in the  
37 Department of Health (DOH). The purpose of the board will be to  
38 review all aspects of behavioral health services in New Jersey and  
39 make recommendations for legislation or other such action as it  
40 deems appropriate with regard to improving, expanding, and  
41 facilitating the provision of behavioral health services to the  
42 citizens of this State. Behavioral health services reviewed and  
43 analyzed by the task force shall include both services for  
44 individuals with mental health concerns and substance use  
45 disorders.

46 The board will consist of 26 members: the Commissioners of  
47 Health, Human Services, and Children and Families, or their  
48 designees, who would serve ex officio; and 23 public members,

1 with seven members to be appointed by the Governor, and eight  
2 members each to be appointed by the Senate President and the  
3 Speaker of the General Assembly. The members are to represent the  
4 geographic diversity of New Jersey, and the DOH will be required  
5 to provide staff support to the board.

6 The members appointed by the Governor would include: one  
7 person upon the recommendation of the New Jersey Association of  
8 Mental Health and Addiction Agencies; one person upon the  
9 recommendation of the National Alliance on Mental Illness New  
10 Jersey; one person upon the recommendation of the Mental Health  
11 Association in New Jersey; one person upon the recommendation of  
12 the New Jersey Hospital Association who represents an acute care  
13 entity; one person upon the recommendation of the Society of  
14 Psychiatric Advanced Practice Nurses of the New Jersey State  
15 Nurses Association; one person upon the recommendation of the  
16 New Jersey Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association; and one person  
17 upon the recommendation of the New Jersey Primary Care  
18 Association.

19 The members appointed by the Senate President would include:  
20 one person upon the recommendation of the New Jersey Chapter of  
21 the American College of Emergency Physicians; one person  
22 representing a health insurance carrier and one person representing  
23 a Medicaid managed care organization, both upon the  
24 recommendation of the New Jersey Association of Health Plans;  
25 one psychiatrist upon the recommendation of the Medical Society  
26 of New Jersey; one representative of an entity which is designated  
27 by the State to provide screening services; one representative of an  
28 organization which works with individuals with intellectual or  
29 developmental disabilities; one representative of an organization  
30 which works with individuals who have a substance use disorder;  
31 and one representative of an entity which provides early  
32 intervention support services in the State.

33 The members to be appointed by the Speaker of the General  
34 Assembly would include: one representative of Rutgers University  
35 Behavioral Health Care; one person upon the recommendation of  
36 the New Jersey Hospital Association; one representative of the  
37 Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers; one person upon the  
38 recommendation of the Advocates for Children of New Jersey; one  
39 representative of an outpatient treatment provider; one  
40 representative of an entity that provides community social services;  
41 one person upon the recommendation of the New Jersey  
42 Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons; and one health  
43 care provider, upon the recommendation of the New Jersey Chapter  
44 of the American Academy of Pediatrics, who specializes in treating  
45 children and adolescents.

46 The task force is to organize and issue a report to the Legislature  
47 and the Governor 18 months after the bill's effective date. After the  
48 submission of the report, the task force will expire.

1       The task force is permitted to solicit and receive grants and other  
2 funds that are made available for the task force's purposes from  
3 public and private entities. The task force may contract with a third  
4 party, such as the Rutgers Center for State Health Policy, to meet  
5 the objectives of the task force as they are delineated in the bill.

6       The goals of the task force include, but are not limited to,  
7 conducting a survey of the current behavioral health care system on  
8 a county by county basis for acute, short-term, and long-term care;  
9 identifying gaps in the current behavioral health care system for the  
10 delivery of care for children, adolescents, and adults on a county by  
11 county basis for acute, short-term, and long-term care; and making  
12 recommendations to: ensure access to quality emergency behavioral  
13 health care in a timely manner; coordinate services among  
14 providers; facilitate access to comprehensive behavioral health care  
15 and treatment; maximize the effective use of available funding;  
16 establish new programs or revise existing programs; promote  
17 enhanced communication and information exchanges; and any other  
18 matters the task force deems necessary and appropriate.