

ASSEMBLY, No. 2281

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 212th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JANUARY 30, 2006

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman JOSEPH CRYAN

District 20 (Union)

Assemblyman WILLIAM D. PAYNE

District 29 (Essex and Union)

SYNOPSIS

Requires suicide and mental health screening of juveniles in county detention centers.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/7/2006)

1 AN ACT concerning county juvenile detention facilities and
2 supplementing P.L.1995, c.284 (C.52:17B-169 et seq.).
3

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

7 1. The Juvenile Justice Commission shall establish standards for
8 suicide and mental health screening in county juvenile detention
9 facilities in accordance with the provisions of this act. The
10 standards shall require that each county detention facility develop
11 written policies concerning mental health screening, suicide
12 screening, suicide prevention protocols and other mental and
13 emotional health-related issues and that each county juvenile
14 detention facility make psychological or psychiatric services
15 available to juveniles as needed.
16

17 2. a. Upon admission to a county juvenile detention facility, a
18 juvenile shall be screened for risk of suicide in accordance with the
19 facility's suicide prevention protocols written policies required by
20 section 1 of this act. The suicide risk screening shall include, but
21 not be limited to, the use of a standardized suicide risk
22 questionnaire designated and made available by the Juvenile Justice
23 Commission. The findings shall be recorded and brought to the
24 attention of the appropriate medical or mental health staff as soon
25 as possible.

26 b. If a juvenile shows evidence of suicide risk, the facility's
27 suicide prevention protocols shall be immediately implemented.
28 The policies shall include an increased level of supervision of a
29 juvenile showing evidence of suicide risk until appropriate mental
30 health services can be obtained. The facility administrator, or the
31 administrator's designee, shall be immediately notified if a juvenile:

- 32 (1) is suspected of being at risk of attempting suicide or in
33 emotional distress;
34 (2) has made a suicidal gesture or attempt; or
35 (3) scores in a suicide caution or warning range in a screening.
36

37 3. Between 24 and 48 hours following admission to a county
38 juvenile detention facility, a juvenile shall undergo mental health
39 screening using a mental health screening tool designated by the
40 Juvenile Justice Commission and in accordance with the facility's
41 written policies required by section 1 of this act. If the screening
42 tool indicates that a referral for additional screening or mental
43 health services is appropriate, that referral shall occur as soon as
44 possible. If the screening indicates a warning or caution, the
45 juvenile shall be placed on, and remain under, increased supervision
46 until it is determined by a mental health clinician that a heightened
47 level of supervision is no longer needed to ensure the safety of the
48 juvenile.

1 4. No person shall perform a suicide risk screening pursuant to
2 section 2 of this act or a mental health screening pursuant to section
3 3 of this act unless that person has been certified by the Juvenile
4 Justice Commission as qualified to perform such screening.

5
6 5. The Juvenile Justice Commission, in conjunction with the
7 Department of Human Services, shall establish and maintain a
8 confidential Statewide database of the suicide risk screenings
9 required by section 2 of this act and the mental health screenings
10 required by section 3 of this act to be used exclusively by persons
11 performing suicide risk and mental health screenings.

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13 6. a. The Juvenile Justice Commission shall monitor the number
14 of suicides that occur at each county juvenile detention facility.

15 b. Upon an initial suicide at a facility, the commission shall
16 conduct an evaluation of the facility's compliance with the
17 provisions of this act, an accountability assessment and an action
18 report.

19 c. If a second suicide occurs within seven years of the initial
20 suicide, the Juvenile Justice Commission shall, within 30 days, and
21 with the approval of the Attorney General, evaluate the facility for
22 compliance with the provisions of this act. A facility shall not
23 admit additional juveniles until the Attorney General has certified
24 that the facility is in compliance with the provisions of this act.

25 d. If a third or subsequent suicide occurs within seven years of
26 an initial suicide, the facility shall be immediately closed and shall
27 not reopen until the Governor determines that it shall reopen. A
28 task force comprised of the following 11 members shall assist the
29 Governor in making this determination: the Executive Director of
30 the Juvenile Justice Commission, or a designee; the Attorney
31 General, or a designee; the Child Advocate, or a designee;
32 Commissioner of Human Services, or a designee; two members of
33 the General Assembly, to be chosen by the Speaker of the General
34 Assembly, who shall not be of the same political party, and shall
35 not represent the county within which the facility being evaluated is
36 located; two members of the Senate, to be chosen by the Senate
37 President, who shall not be of the same political party and shall not
38 represent the county within which the facility being evaluated is
39 located; one public member; a director of a county juvenile
40 detention facility, but not of the county facility being evaluated; and
41 a member of the board of chosen freeholders of the county within
42 which the facility being evaluated is located.

43
44 7. The Juvenile Justice Commission, in conjunction with the
45 Department of Human Services, shall annually submit to the
46 Governor and the Legislature, for seven years following the
47 effective date of this act, a report detailing:

- 1 a. the number of suicides and suicide attempts at each county
2 juvenile detention facility;
- 3 b. the number of suicide and mental health screenings that have
4 been conducted at each facility and the number of juveniles whose
5 screenings have indicated a warning or caution;
- 6 c. the number of juveniles who have been referred for additional
7 screening or evaluation; and
- 8 d. a summary of the diagnoses for juveniles who have received
9 treatment.

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11 8. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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16 This bill would require the Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) to
17 adopt standards for suicide and mental health screening in county
18 juvenile detention facilities. The bill would require county
19 detention facilities to have written policies concerning mental
20 health screening, suicide screening, suicide prevention protocols
21 and other mental and emotional health-related issues and to make
22 psychological or psychiatric services available to juveniles as
23 needed.

24 The bill also would require juveniles to be screened for risk of
25 suicide upon admission to a county juvenile detention facility. The
26 suicide risk screening would include, but need not be limited to, the
27 use of a standardized suicide risk questionnaire designated and
28 made available by the JJC. The findings are to be recorded and
29 brought to the attention of the appropriate medical or mental health
30 staff as soon as possible. If a juvenile displays evidence of suicide
31 risk, the facility's suicide prevention protocols would be
32 immediately implemented. The procedures would require an
33 increased level of supervision of a juvenile showing evidence of
34 suicide risk until appropriate mental health services can be
35 obtained. The bill further requires that the facility administrator, or
36 the administrator's designee, be immediately notified if a juvenile is
37 suspected of being at risk of attempting suicide or in emotional
38 distress, has made a suicidal gesture or attempt, or scores in a
39 suicide caution or warning range in a screening.

40 Additionally, juveniles would be required by the bill to undergo
41 mental health screening using a mental health screening tool
42 designated by the JJC within 24 to 48 hours of admission to a
43 county juvenile detention facility. If the screening tool indicates
44 that a referral for additional screening or mental health services is
45 appropriate, that referral shall occur as soon as possible. If the
46 screening indicates a warning or caution the juvenile shall be placed
47 on, and remain under, increased supervision until it is determined
48 by a mental health clinician that the heightened level of supervision

1 is no longer needed to ensure the safety of the juvenile. Currently,
2 all 17 county juvenile detention facilities employ the Massachusetts
3 Youth Screening Instrument-2 (MAYSI-2) to screen for mental
4 health needs.

5 Under the bill, persons performing the required suicide risk and
6 mental health screenings would have to be certified by the JJC.

7 The bill would required the JJC, in conjunction with the
8 Department of Human Services, to establish and maintain a
9 confidential Statewide database of suicide and mental health
10 screenings performed at county juvenile detention facilities.

11 The JJC also is required to monitor the number of suicides at
12 each county juvenile detention facility. When a suicide occurs at a
13 facility, the JJC must evaluate the facility's compliance with the
14 bill's provisions and prepare an accountability assessment and
15 action report. If a second suicide occurs within seven years of the
16 first suicide, the bill requires the JJC, with the approval of the
17 Attorney General, to evaluate the facility for compliance with the
18 bill's provisions within 30 days. The facility would be prohibited
19 from admitting additional juveniles until the Attorney General has
20 certified that the facility is in compliance with the bill's provisions.
21 If a third or subsequent suicide occurs within seven years of the
22 first suicide, the facility is to be immediately closed and is
23 prohibited from reopening until the Governor determines it should
24 reopen. An 11-member task force would be appointed to assist the
25 Governor in making the determination. Members of the task force
26 include: the Executive Director of the JJC; the Attorney General;
27 the Child Advocate; the Commissioner of Human Services; two
28 members of the General Assembly; two members of the Senate; one
29 public member; a director of a county juvenile detention facility;
30 and a member of the board of chosen freeholders of the county
31 within which the facility being evaluated is located.

32 Finally, the bill requires the JJC to submit annually for seven
33 years a report to the Governor and the Legislature detailing: 1) the
34 number of suicides and suicide attempts at each county juvenile
35 detention facility; 2) the number of suicide and mental health
36 screenings that have been conducted at each facility and the number
37 of juveniles whose screenings have indicated a warning or caution;
38 3) the number of juveniles who have been referred for additional
39 screening or evaluation; and 4) a summary of the diagnoses for
40 juveniles who have received treatment.