

CHAPTER 12

AN ACT concerning postpartum depression and amending P.L.2000, c.167.

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

1. Section 2 of P.L.2000, c.167 (C.26:2-176) is amended to read as follows:

C.26:2-176 Development of policies, procedures for care.

2. The Commissioner of Health and Senior Services, in conjunction with the State Board of Medical Examiners and the New Jersey Board of Nursing, shall work with health care facilities and licensed health care professionals in the State to develop policies and procedures to achieve the following requirements concerning postpartum depression:

- a. Physicians, nurse midwives and other licensed health care professionals providing prenatal care to women shall provide education to women and their families about postpartum depression in order to lower the likelihood that new mothers will continue to suffer from this illness in silence;

- b. All birthing facilities in the State shall provide departing new mothers and fathers and other family members, as appropriate, with complete information about postpartum depression, including its symptoms, methods of coping with the illness and treatment resources;

- c. Physicians, nurse midwives and other licensed health care professionals providing postnatal care to women shall screen new mothers for postpartum depression symptoms prior to discharge from the birthing facility and at the first few postnatal check-up visits; and

- d. Physicians, nurse midwives and other licensed health care professionals providing prenatal and postnatal care to women shall include fathers and other family members, as appropriate, in both the education and treatment processes to help them better understand the nature and causes of postpartum depression so that they too can overcome the spillover effects of the illness and improve their ability to be supportive of the new mother.

2. This act shall take effect on the 180th day after enactment, except that the Commissioner of Health and Senior Services shall take such anticipatory administrative action in advance as shall be necessary for its implementation.

Approved April 13, 2006.