

## CHAPTER 255

AN ACT establishing a reflex sympathetic dystrophy syndrome education and research program and supplementing Title 26 of the Revised Statutes.

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

C.26:2AA-1 Short title.

1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy Syndrome Education and Research Program Act."

C.26:2AA-2 Findings, declarations relative to reflex sympathetic dystrophy syndrome (RSDS) education and research program.

2. The Legislature finds and declares that:

a. Reflex sympathetic dystrophy syndrome (RSDS), also known as complex regional pain syndrome, is a debilitating and progressively chronic condition characterized by severe burning pain, pathological changes in bone and skin, excessive sweating, tissue swelling and extreme sensitivity to touch;

b. More specifically, RSDS is thought to be a nerve disorder that generally occurs at the site of a minor or major trauma injury, but may also occur without an apparent injury to the afflicted person;

c. While the causes of RSDS are unknown, the syndrome is thought to be the result of damaged nerves of the sympathetic nervous system;

d. The disorder is unique in that it simultaneously affects the nerves, skin, muscles, blood vessels and bones, and if untreated, can result in permanent deformity and chronic pain;

e. RSDS is often misdiagnosed because this condition is either unknown or is poorly understood; the prognosis for patients suffering from RSDS is generally much better when the condition is identified and treated as early as possible, ideally within three months of identifying the first symptoms;

f. If treatment is delayed, the disorder can quickly spread to the entire limb, and changes in bone and muscle may become irreversible, resulting in limited mobility, atrophy of the muscles and eventual permanent disability of patients; and

g. Since a delay in diagnosis or treatment for this syndrome can result in severe physical and physiological problems, and early recognition and prompt treatment of RSDS provides the greatest opportunity for recovery, it is in the best interest of the public to establish a program to educate both individuals and medical professionals regarding this debilitating condition and to promote research to accurately identify, diagnose and treat RSDS.

C.26:2AA-3 Definitions relative to RSDS.

3. As used in this act:

"Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Health and Senior Services; and

"Reflex sympathetic dystrophy syndrome" or "RSDS" means a debilitating and progressively chronic condition characterized by severe burning pain, pathological changes in bone and skin, excessive sweating, tissue swelling and extreme sensitivity to touch.

C.26:2AA-4 Establishment of education and research program.

4. The commissioner shall establish a reflex sympathetic dystrophy syndrome education and research program in the Department of Health and Senior Services. The purpose of the program is to promote public awareness of the causes of RSDS, the value of early detection

and the diagnosis of and possible treatments for the syndrome, and to promote research, through public and private sources, to accurately identify, diagnose and treat RSDS.

**C.26:2AA-5 Responsibilities of DHSS.**

5. The Department of Health and Senior Services shall:

a. establish a public education program through the department's website, to promote RSDS education, which will enable individuals to make informed decisions about their health, including, but not limited to the following elements:

- (1) the cause and nature of RSDS;
- (2) the risk factors that contribute to the manifestation of RSDS;
- (3) available treatment options, including risks and benefits of those options;
- (4) environmental safety and injury prevention;
- (5) rest and use of appropriate body mechanics;
- (6) the availability of RSDS diagnostic, treatment and outreach services in the community; and

(7) any other factors or elements that might mitigate the effects of RSDS;

b. notify local health departments, hospitals, clinics and other health care providers about the availability of information concerning RSDS on the department's website;

c. within the limits of funds available to the department for this purpose, coordinate, promote and offer professional education programs, through institutions of higher education, for health care providers and health-related community-based organizations, which may include, but are not limited to the following elements:

- (1) research findings;
- (2) the cause and nature of RSDS;
- (3) the risk factors, including, but not limited to, lifestyle, heredity and drug interactions;
- (4) the diagnostic procedures and appropriate indications for their use;
- (5) medical and surgical treatment options, including experimental and established drug therapies and the risks and benefits of each option;
- (6) environmental safety and injury prevention; and
- (7) the availability of RSDS diagnosis and treatment and support services in the community; and

d. promote research, through both private and public funding sources, to accurately identify, diagnose and treat RSDS.

**C.26:2AA-6 Powers of commissioner concerning funding.**

6. The commissioner may accept and expend any grants, awards or other funds or appropriations as may be made available for the purposes of this act.

7. This act shall take effect on the 180th day after enactment.

Approved January 7, 2008.