

CHAPTER 309

AN ACT establishing and funding a “New Jersey Fire and EMS Crisis Intervention Services” telephone hotline and supplementing Title 52 of the Revised Statutes.

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

C.52:27D-25ll Definitions relative to a “New Jersey Fire and EMS Crisis Intervention Services” telephone hotline.

1. As used in P.L.2019, c.309 (C.52:27D-25ll et seq.):

"Division" means the Division of Fire Safety in the Department of Community Affairs.

"University" means Rutgers, The State University/University Behavioral Health Care.

C.52:27D-25mm Establishment, maintenance of “New Jersey Fire and EMS Crisis Intervention Services” telephone hotline.

2. a. The division, in conjunction with the university, shall establish and maintain, on a 24-hour daily basis, a toll-free "New Jersey Fire and EMS Crisis Intervention Services" telephone hotline. The hotline shall receive and respond to calls from fire and emergency services personnel who experience depression, anxiety, stress, or any other psychological or emotional disorder or condition. The operators of the hotline shall identify and refer callers to further debriefing and counseling services.

b. The operators of the hotline shall be trained by the division and the university, and, to the greatest extent possible, shall be persons who are: (1) familiar with the post-trauma disorders and psychological and emotional disorders and conditions that are frequently experienced by fire and emergency services personnel; or (2) trained to provide counseling services involving marriage and family life, substance abuse, personal stress management, and other emotional or psychological disorders or conditions that may adversely affect fire and emergency services personnel.

c. The division and the university shall provide for the confidentiality of the names of the fire and emergency services personnel calling, the information discussed by a caller and operator, and any referrals for further debriefing or counseling. However, the division, after consultation with the university, may, by rule and regulation, establish guidelines for monitoring any fire or emergency services caller who exhibits signs of a severe emotional or psychological disorder or condition which the operator handling the call reasonably believes may result in harm to the caller or any other person.

C.52:27D-25nn List of qualified persons to accept referrals.

3. The division, after consultation with the university, shall prepare a list of the following persons who are willing to accept referrals and administer the debriefing and counseling services provided through the telephone hotline: appropriately licensed or certified psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers; appropriately trained and qualified counselors; and experienced former fire and emergency services personnel.

C.52:27D-25oo Consultation with representatives.

4. In establishing the hotline pursuant to the provisions of P.L.2019, c.309 (C.52:27D-25ll et seq.), the division and university shall consult with a representative from the New Jersey Career Fire Chiefs Association; New Jersey State Firefighters Mutual Benevolent Association; Professional Firefighters Association of New Jersey; New Jersey Hospital Association; New Jersey Association of Paramedic Programs; EMS Council of New Jersey; New Jersey State Fire Chiefs Association; any other exclusive bargaining representative for a New Jersey fire department or force, or emergency services agency or provider; and any

others that the division deems appropriate.

C.52:27D-25pp Minimum annual appropriation.

5. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, an amount not less than \$250,000, as determined by the Commissioner of Community Affairs, shall be annually appropriated to defray the costs associated with operating and maintaining the “New Jersey Fire and EMS Crisis Intervention Services” telephone hotline. The appropriation shall be payable out of the fees and penalties derived from fire code enforcement activities pursuant to the “Uniform Fire Safety Act,” P.L.1983, c.383 (C.52:27D-192 et seq.).

6. This act shall take effect on the first day of the fifth month following enactment, but the Director of the Division of Fire Safety may take any anticipatory administrative action in advance as shall be necessary for the implementation of this act.

Approved January 13, 2020.