
Singer Bill that Would Establish Pilot Program for Mental Health Care Facilities Clears Committee

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"The mental health of young people in New Jersey is a growing area of concern, especially after the unnecessary lockdowns during the pandemic," said Singer (R-30). "Currently, there is a greater demand for inpatient mental health treatment and services for juvenile patients than there are available beds. In fact, some health care facilities even have vacant adult mental health treatment beds, which under current law, cannot be used to treat juvenile patients. My legislation will create a pilot program to study whether these facilities can effectively treat juvenile patients using vacant adult beds. This will help so many patients receive the care and treatment they need and maximize the use of mental health resources throughout New Jersey."

Under Singer's bill, [S-2541](#), a health care facility must meet the following qualifications to participate in the pilot program: employ at least one licensed psychiatrist who specializes in

child or juvenile psychiatry; employ nurses who are trained to treat juveniles at all times within the health care facility; employ treatment programs that are appropriate to the age of a juvenile; and be licensed to treat mental health patients in both involuntary psychiatric beds and voluntary psychiatric beds.

For the duration of the program, a health care facility may place juvenile patients in vacant beds that are otherwise reserved for adult patients. Facilities may also place adult patients, who are legally committed to psychiatric inpatient care, in voluntary psychiatric beds.