

**CHAPTER 37I**  
**FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES**

**Authority**

N.J.S.A. 30:4-177.52.

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Chapter 37I, Family Support Services, expires on February 1, 2004.

**Chapter Historical Note**

Chapter 37I, Family Support Services, was adopted as R.1999 d.39, effective February 1, 1999. See: Source and Effective Date.

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**SUBCHAPTER 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

**10:37I-1.1 Purpose; authority**

(a) Pursuant to P.L. 1995, c.314, the Division of Mental Health Services of the Department of Human Services shall establish a program of family support services designed to

strengthen and promote families who provide care in the community for a family member with a serious mental illness.

(b) A Statewide family support policy for persons with a serious mental illness shall acknowledge that families themselves are able to define their own needs and select their own services; these family supports shall be chosen by families, controlled by families and monitored by families.

(c) The system of family support shall vary in scope and intensity based upon the needs of a particular family unit and shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Service coordination;
2. Estate and transition planning;
3. Housing assistance;
4. Homemaker assistance;
5. Accessing vocational and employment services;
6. After-school care;
7. Transportation;
8. Respite care;
9. Family education and training;
10. Medication education;
11. Self-advocacy training;
12. Entitlement training; and
13. Other services as identified by the family.

(d) Adults with a serious mental illness should be afforded the opportunity to make decisions for themselves, live in typical homes and communities and exercise their full rights as citizens. When families serve as the primary provider of care for a family member with a serious mental illness, the families should be provided with the supports they need to sustain that family member with dignity in a community setting, within available funding limits.

(e) No more than 10 percent of funds disbursed to a PA shall be allocated for administrative purposes.

(f) The Division and any agency funded by the Division to provide family support services shall assist families in obtaining all other sources of funding before using funds appropriated pursuant to and available for the purposes of P.L. 1995, c.314.

(g) The services provided pursuant to this act shall not supplant any existing rights, entitlements or services for which the family or family member with a serious mental illness may be eligible.

(h) Notwithstanding the provisions of any law to the contrary, the family support services provided pursuant to P.L. 1995, c.314 shall be considered a State benefit and shall not be counted as income for the purposes of State taxation or eligibility for other State benefits.

### 10:37I-1.2 Scope

The provisions of this chapter shall apply to all families who reside in the State of New Jersey and who are actively involved in caring for, or supporting, a family member with a serious mental illness.

### 10:37I-1.3 Definitions

The following words and terms, when used in this chapter, have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

“Adult” means any individual 18 years of age or older.

“Commissioner” means the Commissioner of the Department of Human Services.

“Department” means the Department of Human Services.

“Division” means the Division of Mental Health Services in the Department of Human Services.

“Family” means persons related to the family member with a serious mental illness by blood, marriage, adoption, guardianship, foster care or other significant care giving relationship.

“Family satisfaction with services” means a measurement of a family’s experience with a particular PA as to the quality, impact, accessibility and relevance of IFSS.

“Family support services” means a coordinated system of on-going public and private support services which are designed to maintain and enhance the quality of life of a family.

“Family unit” means the family member with a serious mental illness and his or her family.

“Program” means the program of family support services established pursuant to this chapter.

“Serious mental illness” means a diagnosable mental disorder which is sufficiently severe and enduring to cause periodic or lasting functional impairment in one or more life areas, often recurrent contact with the mental health system, or a significant risk of hospitalization in a State, county or private psychiatric institution.

“Statewide family advocacy organization” means an organization consisting primarily of family members of people with a serious mental illness that is dedicated to improving the lives of persons with serious mental illness and their families through mutual support, education and advocacy.

## SUBCHAPTER 2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

### 10:37I-2.1 General eligibility

(a) A family is eligible to participate in the program if the family resides in the State and is actively involved in caring for, or supporting, a family member with a serious mental illness.

(b) The services provided pursuant to this chapter shall not supplant any existing rights, entitlements or services for which the family or family member with a serious mental illness may be eligible.

## SUBCHAPTER 3. FAMILY SUPPORT COORDINATOR

### 10:37I-3.1 Role of the coordinator

(a) The family support program shall be monitored by the Division and administered by a Family Support Coordinator working under the direction of a Statewide family advocacy organization designated by the Division to administer the program. The Statewide family advocacy organization shall not be under contract with the Division to provide Intensive Family Support Services.

(b) The Family Support Coordinator shall be qualified by training and experience to perform the duties of this position, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 30:4-177.47, as demonstrated by the following:

1. A master’s level degree in social work, psychology, public health or other similar advanced degrees.
2. Five years experience in the planning, coordination and implementation of services for people with serious mental illness and their families.
3. Experience in the development of needs assessments.
4. Experience in the development of family support services.
5. Ability to facilitate workgroups consisting of family members.

(c) The Family Support Coordinator, in conjunction with the Statewide family advocacy organization and local family advocacy groups, shall work to expand and establish family support services throughout the State, in accordance with 1 through 3 below.

1. In conjunction with the three regional family working groups and the Statewide family working group, established pursuant to N.J.S.A. 30:4-177.48, the Family Support Coordinator shall adopt, review and revise as needed, but no less than annually, a State Family Support Services Plan for Families of Persons with a Serious Mental Illness. The Plan shall identify: