

SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR  
CITIZENS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO  
**SENATE, No. 2716**

with committee amendments

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: NOVEMBER 30, 2023

The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 2716 This bill, as amended, requires the Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services within the Department of Human Services, or a managed care organization that contracts with the division to provide medical services to beneficiaries of the NJ FamilyCare program, to accept, and reimburse, claims for services regarding two groups of behavioral health providers. Under both groups, the services are required to be rendered to a NJ FamilyCare beneficiary and covered under the NJ FamilyCare program.

The first group are those claims for services submitted by a clinical social worker, a professional counselor, or a marriage and family therapist. These claims are eligible for reimbursement provided that the provider holds a current, valid license issued pursuant to State law and is an approved NJ FamilyCare provider.

The second group are those claims for services provided by a social worker, an associate counselor, or an associate marriage and family therapist. These claims are eligible for reimbursement provided that:

- 1) the provider holds a current, valid license issued pursuant to State law;
- 2) the claim is submitted by a licensed clinical social worker, a licensed professional counselor, or a licensed marriage and family therapist who serves as the provider's supervising practitioner, as approved by the professional board that regulates the provider's license; and
- 3) the provider's supervising practitioner is an approved NJ FamilyCare provider.

The bill, as amended, also explicitly states that none of the bill's provisions are be construed to allow a licensed social worker, licensed associate counselor, or licensed associate marriage and family therapist to practice within the scope of their license without a supervising practitioner or to require NJ FamilyCare to reimburse a claim for covered services submitted by a licensed social worker,

licensed associate counselor, or licensed associate marriage and family therapist.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments require the NJ FamilyCare Program to accept, and reimburse, claims for services regarding the following providers: professional counselors, marriage and family therapists, social workers, associate counselors, and associate marriage and family therapists. As introduced, the bill only applies to clinical social workers.

The committee amendments apply the same qualifications for reimbursement as are applicable to clinical social workers under the introduced bill to professional counselors and marriage and family therapists. Specifically, services are required to be rendered to a NJ FamilyCare beneficiary and covered under the NJ FamilyCare program; and the provider must hold a current, valid license issued pursuant to State law and be an approved NJ FamilyCare provider.

The committee amendments provide that in order for the provisions of the bill to apply to social workers, associate counselors, and associate marriage and family therapists that: 1) services are required to be rendered to a NJ FamilyCare beneficiary and covered under the NJ FamilyCare program; 2) the provider must hold a current, valid license issued pursuant to State law; 3) the service claim is to be submitted by a licensed clinical social worker, a licensed professional counselor, or a licensed marriage and family therapists who serves as the provider's supervising practitioner, as approved by the professional board that regulates the provider's license; and 4) the provider's supervising practitioner is an approved NJ FamilyCare provider and serves as the rendering service provider for the purposes of the claim.

The committee amendments explicitly state that the bill is not to be construed to allow a licensed social worker, licensed associate counselor, or licensed associate marriage and family therapist to practice within the scope of their license without a supervising practitioner or to require NJ FamilyCare to reimburse a claim for covered services submitted by a licensed social worker, licensed associate counselor, or licensed associate marriage and family therapist.

The committee amendments update the bill's synopsis to reflect these changes.