

SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR
CITIZENS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 2964

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: FEBRUARY 27, 2017

The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 2964.

This bill prohibits residential substance use disorder treatment facilities and aftercare facilities (including sober living homes and halfway houses) from denying admission to a person on the basis that the person is currently receiving medication assisted treatment for a substance use disorder, provided the treatment is administered by a licensed treatment provider. The bill specifies that medication assisted treatment includes but need not be limited to, methadone, buprenorphine, naltrexone, or any other medication approved by the Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of a substance use disorder.

The science of addiction medicine is increasingly finding that substance use disorders can be most effectively treated with a combination of counseling, peer support, and medication. Some of the medications used in such treatments, such as methadone and suboxone, are themselves addictive, but they can be safely administered and managed by trained medical professionals. Nonetheless, some substance use disorder treatment and aftercare programs operate with a philosophy that an addiction to one substance should not be replaced with an addiction to another, and therefore they object to medication assisted treatment, instead emphasizing counseling and peer support. This philosophy, while earnest and well-meaning, has the unfortunate result of barring individuals receiving medically supervised medication assisted treatment from other recovery-related treatment, aftercare, and housing options. This bill is intended to remove scientifically outdated barriers to residential treatment, aftercare, and housing options for individuals in recovery.