

ASSEMBLY, No. 2646

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 13, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE

District 37 (Bergen)

Assemblywoman SHANIQUE SPEIGHT

District 29 (Essex)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes Medicaid program to provide housing-related services to individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/13/2020)

1 **AN ACT** concerning housing related services provided to Medicaid
2 recipients and supplementing Title 30 of the Revised Statutes.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. a. Subject to approval of the Secretary of the federal
8 Department of Health and Human Services for federal financial
9 participation, the Commissioner of Human Services shall establish,
10 within the Medicaid program established pursuant to P.L.1968,
11 c.413 (C.30:4D-1 et seq.), a program to assist individuals
12 experiencing chronic homelessness in obtaining and maintaining
13 sustainable housing. The commissioner may establish the program
14 as a component of an existing Medicaid home- and community-
15 based services program that is accessible by individuals
16 experiencing chronic homelessness, or as a new and separate
17 Medicaid program.

18 b. The program shall include State-level housing-related
19 collaborative activities, including developing formal and informal
20 agreements among the Department of Human Services, the
21 Department of Community Affairs, county welfare agencies, and
22 county and local housing and community development agencies to
23 facilitate access to existing and new housing resources.

24 c. The program shall also include individual housing transition
25 services, which may include:

26 (1) conducting a tenant screening and housing assessment to
27 identify an individual's preferences and barriers to successful
28 tenancy;

29 (2) developing an individualized housing support plan;

30 (3) assisting with the housing search and application processes;

31 (4) identifying resources to cover transition costs;

32 (5) ensuring the environment is safe and ready for move-in;

33 (6) assisting in arranging for and supporting the details of the
34 move; and

35 (7) developing a housing support crisis plan that includes
36 prevention and early intervention services when housing is
37 jeopardized.

38 d. The program shall also include individual housing and
39 tenancy sustaining services, which may include:

40 (1) providing early identification and intervention for behaviors
41 that may jeopardize housing such as late rental payment and other
42 lease violations;

43 (2) education and training on the role, rights, and
44 responsibilities of the tenant and landlord;

45 (3) coaching on developing and maintaining key relationships
46 with landlord and property managers with a goal of fostering
47 successful tenancy;

- 1 (4) assistance in resolving disputes with landlords or neighbors
2 to reduce risk of eviction or other adverse action;
3 (5) advocacy and linkage with community resources to prevent
4 eviction when housing is or may potentially become jeopardized;
5 (6) assistance with the housing recertification process;
6 (7) coordinating with the tenant to review update, and modify
7 their housing support and crisis plan on a regular basis to reflect
8 current needs and address existing or recurring housing retention
9 barriers; and
10 (8) continuing training in being a good tenant and lease
11 compliance, including ongoing support with activities related to
12 household management.

13
14 2. The Commissioner of Human Services shall apply for such
15 State plan amendments or waivers as may be necessary to
16 implement the provisions of this act and to secure federal financial
17 participating for State Medicaid expenditures under the federal
18 Medicaid program.

19
20 3. The Commissioner of Human Services shall adopt rules and
21 regulations pursuant to the “Administrative Procedure Act,”
22 P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), as necessary to effectuate the
23 purposes of this act.

24
25 4. This act shall take effect on the first day of the seventh
26 month next following the date of enactment, except the
27 Commissioner of Human Services may take any anticipatory
28 administrative action in advance as shall be necessary for the
29 implementation of this act.

30
31

32 STATEMENT

33

34 This bill establishes a Medicaid program to provide housing-
35 related services to individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.

36 The program would include State-level collaborative activities,
37 intended to develop closer relationships among the various State,
38 county, and local programs that provide services to individuals
39 experiencing homelessness. It would also provide individual
40 housing transition services and individual housing and tenancy
41 sustaining services to individuals experiencing chronic
42 homelessness. The bill provides several specific services that may
43 be provided, but permits the Commissioner of Human Services to
44 determine the appropriate service package and service delivery
45 modalities.

46 Currently, individuals experiencing chronic homelessness are
47 generally entitled to medical assistance benefits through the
48 Medicaid program, which are often necessary to treat mental health

1 and substance use disorders that may both cause and be exacerbated
2 by homelessness. Research suggests that the lack of a stable home
3 may limit the effectiveness of these treatments, which thereby
4 makes it less likely that an individual will be able to live a stable,
5 healthy life. Communities with large homeless populations are
6 increasingly turning to a strategy called “housing first,” in which
7 homeless people are helped into a permanent home before or at the
8 same time as other services address the medical and behavioral
9 problems that may provide obstacles to long-term successful
10 tenancy. Although the federal government does not allow federal
11 Medicaid reimbursement for room and board expenses, the Centers
12 for Medicare and Medicaid Services issued guidance in June 2015
13 on the types of housing-related services for which states can claim
14 Medicaid reimbursement. This bill is intended to take advantage of
15 such federal reimbursements to improve services provided to
16 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness, while making
17 available State, county, and local resources that can be repurposed
18 to support other services for the homeless.