

SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR
CITIZENS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 370

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 27, 2020

The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 370.

This bill establishes a program to evaluate county correctional facility inmate needs and assigns certain county caseworkers to assist the inmate in accessing appropriate benefits, treatment, and services.

Specifically, the bill requires the warden, keeper, or administrator of a county correctional facility, in consultation with the Commissioner of Human Services and the superintendent, director, or other chief administrative officer of the county board of social services in each county, to establish a program for evaluating each inmate in a county correctional facility to: (1) determine whether the inmate is eligible to apply for federal, State, and county public assistance program benefits including, but not limited to, State and federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, Medicaid, and housing assistance program benefits; (2) determine whether the inmate would benefit from substance use disorder treatment including, but not limited to, medication-assisted treatment; (3) identify which social services and reentry and rehabilitative programs would benefit the inmate including, but not limited to, the WorkFirst NJ Substance Abuse Initiative; and (4) provide the inmate with information concerning any other treatment, services, and programs which would benefit the inmate.

The evaluation is to be conducted as part of the initial classification process. The warden, keeper, or administrator is required to consult with the superintendent, director, or other chief administrative officer of the county board of social services to ensure that appropriate staff is assigned to work at the facility in order to effectuate the provisions of the bill.

The bill requires each county inmate to be assigned a county board of social services caseworker to assist the inmate in accessing appropriate benefits, treatment, and services. The bill also sets forth the services that the caseworker is required, at a minimum, to provide to the inmate.

Under the bill, the warden, keeper, or administrator of a county correctional facility is required to: provide to each county inmate upon release from the facility a non-driver identification card, to be

issued by the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission, and for which the commission is to assign a former inmate's Department of Corrections identification card a two-point value; and a two-week supply of medications, including medications for the purposes of medication-assisted treatment. The warden, keeper, or administrator also is required to ensure that each inmate is released from custody during regular business hours so that the inmate may access appropriate services and treatment immediately upon release.

In addition, the warden, keeper, or administrator of a county correctional facility is required to record data regarding: the number of inmates who are offered services in accordance with County Jail Rehabilitation and Re-Entry Program; the number of inmates who accept the services offered; the types of services provided to each inmate who accepts the services offered; the race, gender, ethnicity, and age of each inmate; and a record of any crimes committed by inmates who are released from the facility and the types of crimes committed for a period of three years following the inmate's release. These data are to be analyzed to determine whether the rates and nature of rearrests and convictions differ according to whether an inmate received services pursuant to the program.

The warden, keeper, or administrator is required to annually prepare and transmit to the county executive, county manager, or board of chosen freeholders of the county in which the facility is located, and to any county committee on inmate reentry services, the reports prepared, along with any recommendations by the warden, keeper, or administrator for improving the effectiveness of the County Jail Rehabilitation and Re-Entry Program.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2020-2021 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.