

SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR
CITIZENS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 528

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 27, 2020

The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 528.

This bill requires medication-assisted treatment to be offered to all State and county inmates who, following an initial evaluation upon admission to a State or county correctional facility, are determined to be in need of temporary or continued management of a substance use disorder. An inmate determined to be in need of treatment may voluntarily agree to receive medication-assisted treatment after being provided options utilized in the treatment plan.

The bill defines “medication-assisted treatment” as the use of any medications approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration to treat substance use disorders, including extended-release naltrexone, methadone, and buprenorphine, in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies, to provide a whole-patient approach to the treatment of substance use disorders.

Inmates who voluntarily agree to medication-assisted treatment are to have access to withdrawal management services prior to the administration of the medication; behavioral health counseling consistent with current therapeutic standards in a community setting; and a health care practitioner required to provide access to medications approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration.

Under current law, the Commissioners of Human Services and Corrections are required to establish a joint plan to ensure the provision of mental health and substance use disorder services, by licensed service provider organizations, to inmates housed in State-owned, operated, or contracted correctional facilities, including prisons and halfway houses. The plan, in part, requires the commissioners to establish procedures for the provision of medication-assisted treatment, as appropriate and available. This bill requires the commissioners to establish a program to allow all designated State and county inmates the opportunity to receive medication-assisted treatment.

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.