

SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR CITIZENS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 2813

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: AUGUST 21, 2020

The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 2813.

This bill establishes a temporary rate adjustment for certain nursing facilities to support certain wage increases and to cover costs related to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) preparedness.

Specifically, the bill would, subject to any federal approvals as may be required, make the reimbursement rate for Class I, Class II, and Class III nursing facilities equal to the rate received on September 30, 2020, plus a 10 percent adjustment, for the period running from October 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. Facilities receiving the rate adjustment will be required to use at least 60 percent of the rate adjustment for the sole purpose of increasing wages or supplemental pay for certified nurse aides providing direct care. The remainder of the rate adjustment will be used for other costs related to COVID-19 preparedness and response, including enhancing infection control measures, cleaning, reconfiguration of the facility to support cohorting, procurement of personal protective equipment, testing, or other staff wages and needs.

Any facility receiving the rate adjustment under the bill will be required to provide wage and cost data to the Department of Human Services, and attestations from the facility owner to the Department of Health of adherence to certain infection control protocols, including:

(1) the facility has an outbreak response plan in place as required pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2019, c.243 (C.26:2H-12.87), which plan is available to the public through the facility's Internet website and is to include effective communication methods for conveying information concerning outbreaks of infectious diseases at the facility;

(2) the facility has used the personal protective equipment burn rate calculator made available by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and is maintaining certain minimum supplies of personal protective equipment;

(3) the facility has registered with the Department of Health, authorized the department to access data, and is providing information

in accordance with the requirements of Executive Directive No. 20-026, which sets forth requirements for long-term care facilities to reopen; and

(4) the facility has implemented a respiratory protection program that complies with the respiratory protection standard for employees established by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

A facility receiving a rate adjustment under the bill may be subject to recoupment of the rate adjustment by the State if the facility is cited by the Department of Health for two repeat infection control violations during the period from October 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021, or if the facility fails to meet any of the requirements set forth in the bill, including failing to file a required attestation on time.

The Commissioner of Human Services is to apply for State plan amendments or waivers as may be necessary to implement the provisions of the bill and to secure federal financial participation for State Medicaid expenditures under the federal Medicaid program. The bill will not take effect until the commissioner receives approval for the State plan amendments or waivers.

The bill appropriates from the General Fund to the Department of Human Services a one-time appropriation of \$62.3 million for the purpose of effectuating the provisions of the bill.

The provisions of the bill will be held severable, and if any phrase, clause, sentence, or provision is deemed unenforceable, the decision of the court will not affect the validity of the remaining provisions of the bill.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

The committee amended the bill to clarify that the \$62.3 million appropriation authorized under the bill from the General Fund to the Department of Human Services to effectuate the provisions of the bill is a one-time appropriation.