

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 1407

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 9, 2024

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 1407.

As amended, this bill requires Medicaid coverage for community violence prevention services to an individual who has: (1) received medical treatment for an injury sustained as a result of an act of community violence, and (2) been referred by a certified or licensed health care provider or social services provider to receive community violence prevention services from a certified violence prevention professional, after such provider determines such beneficiary to be at elevated risk of a violent injury or retaliation resulting from another act of community violence.

As amended, this bill also requires the Director of the Division of Consumer Affairs in the Department of Law and Public Safety (director), within six months of the effective date of the bill, to develop, in consultation with the Department of Health and the working group established by the bill, and administer a training and certification program for certified violence prevention professionals. The program is to include:

(1) At least 35 hours of initial training, collectively addressing all of the following: the effects of trauma and violence and the basics of trauma-informed care; community violence prevention strategies, including, but not limited to, conflict mediation and retaliation prevention related to community violence; case management and advocacy practices; patient privacy and the federal “Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996,” P.L. 104-191, and any other topic concerning community violence prevention services as determined by the working group established by the bill; and

(2) At least six hours of continuing education every two years.

The director will issue a certification as a violence prevention professional to any individual who applies for certification and demonstrates to the satisfaction of the director that the individual has at least two years of prior experience as a community violence prevention professional and to any individual who possesses a current certificate from a Crisis Intervention Team program approved by the director on the effective date of this bill. Any individual certified in this manner will be required to complete the continuing education requirements set forth in the training and certification program

established by the bill no later than 24 months following the effective date of the bill.

The director may, at the director's discretion, issue a temporary certification as a violence prevention professional to any individual who applies for certification and has less than two years of prior experience as a community violence prevention professional, but has demonstrated to the satisfaction of the director that the individual is capable of performing the functions of a community violence prevention professional. Such temporary certification will expire 24 months following the effective date of the bill.

Any entity that employs or contracts with a certified violence prevention professional to provide community violence prevention services will be required to:

(1) maintain documentation that the certified violence prevention professional has a certification as a violence prevention professional pursuant to the bill; and

(2) ensure that the certified violence prevention professional is providing community violence prevention services in compliance with any applicable standards of care, rules, regulations, and governing law of the State or federal government.

No person, unless the person receives a certification pursuant to this bill as a violence prevention professional, may use the title "certified violence prevention professional" or make use of any title, words, letters, abbreviations, or insignia indicating or implying that the person is a certified violence prevention professional. Furthermore, nothing in the bill is to be construed to alter the scope of practice for any health care professional.

As amended, the bill requires the department to establish a working group to determine which community violence prevention services may be eligible for medical assistance under the bill and which topics will be covered in the training program for certified violence prevention professionals established by the bill.

The working group will include representatives from the Departments of Health and Human Services, representatives from violence intervention programs, health care providers, survivors of community violence, and any other members as determined by the department.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments provide that the Director of the Division of Consumer Affairs (director) will develop, in consultation with the Department of Health (DOH) and the working group established by the bill, and administer a training and certification program for community violence prevention professionals.

The committee amendments provide that the director will issue a certification as a violence prevention professional to any individual who applies for certification and demonstrates to the satisfaction of the director that the individual has at least two years of prior experience as a community violence prevention professional and to any individual

who possesses a current certificate from a Crisis Intervention Team program approved by the director on the effective date of the bill. Any individual certified in this manner will be required to complete the continuing education requirements set forth in the training and certification program no later than 24 months following the bill's effective date. The director may also issue a temporary certification as a violence prevention professional as provided for in the bill.

The committee amendments revise the bill to reflect these changes in the certification requirements for certified community violence prevention professionals.

The committee amendments provide that the DOH will establish a working group, and the membership thereof, to determine which community violence prevention services may be eligible for medical assistance and which topics will be covered in the training program for certified violence prevention professionals.

The committee amendments revise the bill's definition of "community violence" to include acts of domestic and intimate partner violence. The committee amendments revise the synopsis to reflect the changes in the bill.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) estimates that this bill will cause the State to incur annual Medicaid costs to provide community violence prevention services to certain individuals who receive health care services under the State's Medicaid program. The cost to provide these services cannot be quantified as: (1) the reimbursement rate for these services is not established under the bill; and (2) the number of individuals who will receive these services is unpredictable. These State costs will be offset by an increase in federal Medicaid reimbursements.

By way of context, based upon cost projections for an identical Medicaid benefit in Connecticut, the bill could cost the State \$600,000 in net annual State expenses, provided that the State establishes a reimbursement rate of \$12.65 per 15-minute block of service. The OLS notes that research has also shown with the implementation of similar benefits, it is possible that these expenditures may result in an indeterminate decrease in medical costs covered under the Medicaid program associated with repeated injury, trauma, or poor health following victimization due to violence.

The OLS assumes that: (1) the Department of Consumer Affairs will incur costs to develop and administer a training and certification program for certified violence prevention professionals; and (2) the Department of Health's contribution to this effort, as required under the bill, will be implemented under the department's existing budget as such tasks are within the department's current scope of responsibilities.