

ASSEMBLY HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 2609

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 5, 2008

The Assembly Health and Senior Services Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 2609.

The purpose of this bill is to ensure that uninsured patients are charged reasonable rates for inpatient and outpatient health care services provided at hospitals in this State.

The bill prohibits a hospital from charging a patient who is an uninsured resident of New Jersey, and whose family gross income is less than 500% of the federal poverty level, an amount no greater than 15% above the applicable payment rate under the federal Medicare program for the health care services rendered to the patient. The amount charged to the patient is to be in accordance with a sliding scale based on income, which the Department of Health and Senior Services is to develop pursuant to this bill.

For 2008, a family gross income of 500% of the federal poverty level would be: \$52,000 for a single person; \$70,000 for a married couple without dependent children; and \$106,000 for a family of four.

The provisions of this bill are based on recommendations from the *New Jersey Commission on Rationalizing Health Care Resources Final Report, 2008*.

MINORITY STATEMENT

Submitted by Assemblyman Polistina

The sponsor of this bill should be commended for his efforts to ensure that uninsured patients are charged reasonable rates for health care services.

This bill prohibits a hospital from charging uninsured residents, whose family gross income is less than 500% of the federal poverty level, an amount no greater than 15% above the applicable Medicare payment rate.

At this time, because the Commissioner of Health and Senior Services and the sponsor are not able to adequately explain how the income threshold contained in the bill was derived, I am compelled to withhold support for this legislation.