

ASSEMBLY BUDGET COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 2866

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 24, 2010

The Assembly Budget Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 2866.

The bill establishes the State Mental Health Facilities Evaluation Task Force, to study a number of specified issues relating to the care and cost of persons who are currently patients in one of the State psychiatric facilities and to develop a plan for the effective functioning of these facilities that will ensure that the current and long-term needs of these patients are met in the setting most appropriate to their individual circumstances, to which end the task force is to review all relevant past and current patient data for the State psychiatric facilities and examine those issues which serve the purpose of the task force and relate to the State psychiatric facilities, short-term care facilities, county psychiatric facilities, and community-based care for persons with mental illness throughout New Jersey.

The bill directs the task force at a minimum, to:

- evaluate the current and long-term needs for inpatient psychiatric beds in New Jersey;

- assess the availability of appropriate and adequate supportive services in the community;

- evaluate the effects of patient displacement from the State psychiatric facilities on general hospital emergency departments, correctional facilities, and homeless shelters;

- assess the long-term psychiatric care needs of special populations;

- compare the readmission rates at State psychiatric facilities, short-term care facilities, and county psychiatric facilities, by category of facility, during Fiscal Year 2010 with the readmission rates for those facility categories during the prior three fiscal years, and compare the rate of referrals for treatment from screening services during Fiscal Year 2010 with the rate of referrals during the prior three fiscal years;

- analyze and estimate projected cost savings that may be realized if ancillary services at the State psychiatric facilities are outsourced;

- provide a complete analysis of the costs of caring for patients at all State psychiatric facilities, including, but not limited to, a comparison among the State psychiatric facilities of their respective: costs of care; staffing ratios; overtime costs; and costs of renovations

and capital expenses projected over the next five years, including the total cost of bringing Ancora Psychiatric Hospital into compliance with federal standards;

-- examine the feasibility of partial closures at each State psychiatric facility and actions needed to allow for utilization of the most modern facilities; and

-- analyze Joint Commission survey results for each of the State psychiatric facilities and the cost-effectiveness of making changes recommended by the Joint Commission.

The task force is to include 21 members, 8 governmental members and 13 public members, as follows:

the governmental members, comprising:

- 4 Executive Branch members: the Commissioner of Human Services and the Directors of the Divisions of Mental Health Services, Medical Assistance and Health Services, and Developmental Disabilities in the Department of Human Services, or their designees, as ex officio members;

- 4 Legislative Branch members: two members each from the Senate and the General Assembly, to be appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the General Assembly, respectively, who in each case are to be members of different political parties; and

the public members, residents of this State, comprising

- 11 public members to be appointed by the Governor, including: one person who is a county health administrator; one person each appointed upon the recommendation of the New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies, NAMI New Jersey, the Mental Health Association in New Jersey, a New Jersey affiliate of Mental Health America other than the Mental Health Association in New Jersey, the Institute for Health, Health Care Policy and Aging Research at Rutgers University, the New Jersey Psychiatric Association, the New Jersey Hospital Association, and the Coalition of Mental Health Consumer Organizations of New Jersey, respectively; one person who is a member of the board of trustees of a State psychiatric facility; and one member of the general public with an interest or expertise in the work of the task force; and

- 2 two additional members of the general public with an interest or expertise in the work of the task force, who in each case have, or have had, a family member who is, or has been, a patient in a State psychiatric facility, one to be appointed by the President of the Senate and one by the Speaker of the General Assembly.

The Commissioner of Human Services or the commissioner's designee is to serve as chairperson of the task force.

- The task force is to hold a minimum of three public hearings, one each in the southern, central, and northern regions of the State.
- The Department of Human Services is to provide staff support to the task force.

- The task force is to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature, along with any legislative bills that it desires to recommend for adoption by the Legislature, no later than February 1, 2011. The report is to contain the plan provided for in the bill.
- The bill expires upon the issuance of the task force report.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This bill was not certified as requiring a fiscal note.