

SENATE, No. 2598

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 21, 2018

Sponsored by:
Senator LORETTA WEINBERG
District 37 (Bergen)

SYNOPSIS

Expands Medicare health care coverage to all New Jersey residents.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT concerning health care coverage and supplementing Title
2 26 of the Revised Statutes.

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4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

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7 1. a. All residents of New Jersey shall be provided with
8 Medicare health care coverage under Title XVIII of the federal
9 Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. s.1395), regardless of the person's
10 age, health, or disability status.

11 b. The State shall apply to the federal Centers for Medicare &
12 Medicaid Services (CMS) for any waiver of federal statute or
13 regulation necessary to effectuate subsection a. of this section. The
14 application shall include provisions to cover current recipients of
15 health care benefits from federal programs, including but not
16 limited to Medicaid and veterans' benefits, through the New Jersey
17 Medicare program. The State shall review all State and local
18 programs that provide health benefits to ensure that those receiving
19 such benefits are covered by the New Jersey Medicare program.

20 c. CMS will estimate the cost of providing Medicare for all
21 New Jersey residents, and will deduct the estimated revenue from
22 Medicare and Medicaid payments that New Jersey residents, the
23 State of New Jersey, and the federal government pay to offset those
24 costs. CMS will establish Medicare premiums for New Jersey
25 residents accordingly.

26 d. As used in this section, "resident" means a person domiciled
27 in the State for a period of 30 days immediately preceding the date
28 of application for inclusion in the Medicare program.

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30 2. No carrier, as that term is defined in section 2 of P.L.1997,
31 c.192 (C.26:2S-2), shall offer a health benefits plan in this State that
32 includes coverage for health care services which are identical to or
33 in any way duplicative of services which are provided through any
34 part of the Medicare program.

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36 3. Section 1 of this act shall take effect immediately. Section 2
37 shall take effect upon the effective date of federal action to comply
38 with section 1 of this act, and shall apply to policies or contracts
39 issued or renewed on or after that date.

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STATEMENT

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44 This bill would expand the federal Medicare health care
45 coverage program to every New Jersey resident, regardless of age,
46 health, or disability status. Currently, Medicare is generally
47 available only to people who are age 65 years or older, who have a
48 disability, or who have certain specified health conditions. The bill

1 defines a resident as a person domiciled in the State for a period of
2 30 days immediately preceding the date of application for inclusion
3 in the Medicare program.

4 The bill requires the State to apply to the federal Centers for
5 Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for any waiver of federal
6 statute or regulation necessary to effectuate this expansion of
7 Medicare. The application would allow New Jersey to replace
8 federal, State, and local health care programs with universal
9 coverage through New Jersey Medicare. CMS would estimate the
10 cost of providing Medicare for all New Jersey residents, and will
11 deduct the estimated revenue from Medicare and Medicaid
12 payments that New Jersey residents, the State of New Jersey, and
13 the federal government pay to offset those costs. CMS will
14 establish Medicare premiums for New Jersey residents accordingly.

15 Upon the enactment of universal Medicare coverage in New
16 Jersey, the bill would prohibit any health insurance carrier from
17 offering a health benefits plan that includes coverage for health care
18 services covered by Medicare. This provision would ensure full
19 participation in the Medicare program, which would increase
20 enrollment and thus spread the risk of insurance over a larger
21 population to achieve greater cost efficiency in the health care
22 sector.

23 The purpose of this bill is to establish a universal health care
24 coverage program in New Jersey that builds upon the long,
25 successful history of the federal Medicare program. In contrast
26 with most common private insurance plans, Medicare is affordable
27 for nearly everyone, offers greater patient choice in their health care
28 providers, and has much lower out-of-pocket costs. Medicare is
29 more efficient than private insurance, having much lower
30 administrative costs. As an established federal program, expanding
31 Medicare would require no new State bureaucracy and no difficult
32 adjustment for health care providers to a new system. Medicare
33 could provide low-cost health care coverage with to hundreds of
34 thousands of New Jersey residents who currently lack health
35 coverage or who may lose coverage as a result of increasingly
36 complex, costly, and restrictive private health insurance.