

ASSEMBLY HEALTH COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 2130

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 20, 1996

The Assembly Health Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No.2130 with committee amendments.

As amended by the committee, this bill would permit a home health care agency or its employees who are registered professional nurses to carry various noncontrolled prescription drugs without a specific patient prescription. These drugs include sterile saline solution, sterile water, adrenalin/epinephrine, diphenhydramine hydrochloride and heparin flush solution, which are often needed by home care nurses for both routine and emergency use. The bill would enable home health care agencies to stock such medications and allow their nurses to carry and use them in situations where a health care professional has prescribed their use.

Several states, including New Hampshire, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, Texas, Michigan, Arkansas, California and New Mexico, have passed similar legislation permitting home health care agency nurses to carry saline solution and sterile water.

The committee amendments substitute the generic term, "diphenhydramine hydrochloride" for "benedryl." The latter is the trade name for an antihistamine used to treat allergic conditions, such as hay fever and rhinitis, and in cough mixtures.

The amendments also permit registered professional nurses who are employed by home health care agencies to carry and use, in addition to those noncontrolled drugs specified in the bill, other noncontrolled drugs approved by the New Jersey Board of Nursing, in consultation with the State Board of Medical Examiners and the New Jersey Board of Pharmacy.

The amendments further provide that the drugs covered by the bill are to be administered pursuant to protocols utilized, rather than a standing order, by a health care professional licensed to prescribe drugs in New Jersey.

Finally, the amendments require that the Board of Nursing consult with the Board of Medical Examiners, as well as the Board of Pharmacy, in establishing minimum standards for the purchase, storage, handling, use and disposal of the specified drugs covered by this bill.