

ASSEMBLY HEALTH COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 2259

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: NOVEMBER 7, 1996

The Assembly Health Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 2259.

As amended by the committee, this bill establishes a licensing program in the Department of Health and Senior Services for hospice care programs. Only those hospice care programs which are certified as meeting conditions for Medicare participation will qualify for licensure under the bill.

A "hospice care program" is defined as a coordinated program of home, outpatient and inpatient care and services that provides care and services to meet the physical, psychological, social, spiritual, and other special needs that are experienced during the final stages of illness, dying, and bereavement. A hospice care program will be required to provide the following care and services: nursing care; physical, occupational, or speech or language therapy; medical social services; home health aide services; medical supplies and the use of medical appliances; physician's services; short-term inpatient care; counseling services; services of volunteers; and bereavement services.

Pursuant to the bill, a hospice care program will not be permitted to operate without a valid license from the Department of Health and Senior Services.

In addition, the bill specifically exempts hospice care programs from the certificate of need requirement.

The committee amendments provide that:

- C a hospice care program may be operated by a public agency or private organization, or subdivision of either, which is consistent with federal Medicare law governing hospices;
- C the medical social services offered by the hospice may be provided by a certified or licensed social worker;
- C no public agency or private organization shall assume, represent itself as or use the word "hospice" or any modification or derivative thereof, unless the agency or organization is licensed pursuant to this bill; and
- C the Commissioner of Health and Senior Services shall adopt rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this bill.

As reported by the committee, this bill is identical to Senate Bill No. 1620 (Sinagra), which is currently pending in the Senate Health Committee.