CHAPTER 28

AN ACT concerning the provision of health care services to low income persons and revising parts of statutory law.

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

1. Section 2 of P.L.1992, c.160 (C.26:2H-18.52) is amended to read as follows:

C.26:2H-18.52 Definitions relative to provision of health care services to low income persons.

2. As used in sections 1 through 17 of P.L.1992, c.160 (C.26:2H-18.51 through 26:2H-18.67), sections 12 through 15 of P.L.1995, c.133 (C.26:2H-18.59a through C.26:2H-18.59d) and sections 7 through 12 of P.L.1996, c.28 (C.26:2H-18.59e et al.):

"Administrator" means the administrator of the Health Care Subsidy Fund appointed by the commissioner.

"Charity care" means care provided at disproportionate share hospitals that may be eligible for a charity care subsidy pursuant to this act.

"Charity care subsidy" means the component of the disproportionate share payment that is attributable to care provided at a disproportionate share hospital to persons unable to pay for that care, as provided in this act.

"Commission" means the New Jersey Essential Health Services Commission established pursuant to section 4 of this act.

"Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Health.

"Department" means the Department of Health.

"Disproportionate share hospital" means a hospital designated by the Commissioner of Human Services pursuant to Pub.L.89-97 (42 U.S.C.§1396a et seq.) and Pub.L.102-234.

"Disproportionate share payment" means those payments made by the Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services in the Department of Human Services to hospitals defined as disproportionate share hospitals by the Commissioner of Human Services in accordance with federal laws and regulations applicable to hospitals serving a disproportionate number of low income patients. "Fund" means the Health Care Subsidy Fund established pursuant to section 8 of this act.

"Hospital" means an acute care hospital licensed by the Department of Health pursuant to P.L.1971, c.136 (C.26:2H-1 et al.).

"Medicaid" means the New Jersey Medical Assistance and Health Services Program in the Department of Human Services established pursuant to P.L.1968, c.413 (C.30:4D-1 et seq.).

"Medicare" means the program established pursuant to Pub.L.89-97 (42 U.S.C. §1395 et seq.).

"Other uncompensated care" means all costs not reimbursed by hospital payers excluding charity care, graduate medical education, discounts, bad debt and reduction in Medicaid payments.

"Poverty level" means the official poverty level based on family size established and adjusted under Section 673(2) of Subtitle B, the "Community Services Block Grant Act," Pub.L. 97-35 (42 U.S.C. §9902(2)).

"Preliminary cost base" means the preliminary cost base defined in section 2 of P.L.1971, c.136 (C.26:2H-2), as determined by the Hospital Rate Setting Commission.

2. Section 5 of P.L.1992, c.160 (C.26:2H-18.55) is amended to read as follows:

C.26:2H-18.55 Duties of commissioner.

5. The commissioner shall:

a. Administer the fund and establish a mechanism to allocate monies received from the Commissioner of Labor pursuant to section 29 of P.L.1992, c.160 (C.43:21-7b) to the appropriate accounts in the fund as specified in this act;

b. Establish eligibility determination and claims pricing systems for the charity care component of the disproportionate share subsidy, including the development of uniform forms for determining eligibility and submitting claims. The commissioner may contract with a private claims administrator or processor for the purpose of processing hospital claims for charity care pursuant to this act;

c. Establish and implement by January 1, 1997, a schedule of payments for reimbursement

of the charity care component of the disproportionate share payment for services provided to emergency room patients who do not require those services on an emergency basis;

d. In cooperation with the Departments of Insurance and Human Services, develop and provide for the implementation of the Health Access New Jersey program pursuant to section 15 of P.L.1992, c.160 (C.26:2H-18.65);

e. Study and, if feasible, establish hospital cost and outcome reports to provide assistance to consumers of health care in this State in making prudent health care choices;

f. Compile demographic information on recipients of, and types of services paid for by, the charity care component of the disproportionate share payment and periodically report a summary of this information to the Governor and Legislature. The demographic information shall include, at a minimum, the recipient's age, sex, marital status, employment status, type of health insurance coverage, if any, and if the recipient is a child under 18 years of age who does not have health insurance coverage or a married person who does not have health insurance coverage, whether the child's parent or the married person's spouse, as the case may be, has health insurance;

g. (Deleted by amendment, P.L.1995, c.133.)

h. (Deleted by amendment, P.L.1995, c.133.)

i. (Deleted by amendment, P.L.1995, c.133.)

j (Deleted by amendment, P.L.1995, c.133.)

k. (Deleted by amendment, P.L.1995, c.133.)

l. Encourage the use of centralized data storage and transmission technology that utilizes personal and image identification systems as well as identity verification technology for the purposes of enabling a hospital to access medical history, insurance information and other personal information, as appropriate;

m. (Deleted by amendment, P.L.1995, c.133.)

n. (Deleted by amendment, P.L.1995, c.133.)

o. Take such other actions as the commissioner deems necessary and appropriate to carry out the provisions of P.L.1992, c.160 (C.26:2H-18.51 et al.); and

p. Report annually, by December 1 of each year, to the Governor and the Senate and General Assembly standing reference committees on budget and appropriations on the status of the fund.

3. Section 8 of P.L.1992, c.160 (C.26:2H-18.58) is amended to read as follows:

C.26:2H-18.58 Health Care Subsidy Fund.

8. There is established the Health Care Subsidy Fund in the Department of Health.

a. The fund shall be comprised of revenues from employee and employer contributions made pursuant to section 29 of P.L.1992, c.160 (C.43:21-7b), revenues from the hospital assessment made pursuant to section 12 of P.L.1992, c.160 (C.26:2H-18.62), revenues pursuant to section 11 of P.L.1996, c.28 (C.26:2H-18.58c), revenues from interest and penalties collected pursuant to this act and revenues from such other sources as the Legislature shall determine. Interest earned on the monies in the fund shall be credited to the fund. The fund shall be a nonlapsing fund dedicated for use by the State to: (1) distribute charity care and other uncompensated care disproportionate share payments to hospitals and other eligible providers, and provide subsidies for the Health Access New Jersey program established pursuant to section 15 of P.L.1992, c.160 (C.26:2H-18.65); and (2) assist hospitals and other health care facilities in the underwriting of innovative and necessary health care services.

b. The fund shall be administered by a person appointed by the commissioner.

The administrator of the fund is responsible for overseeing and coordinating the collection and reimbursement of fund monies. The administrator is responsible for promptly informing the commissioner if monies are not or are not reasonably expected to be collected or disbursed.

c. The commissioner shall adopt rules and regulations to ensure the integrity of the fund, pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.).

d. The administrator shall establish separate accounts for the charity care component of the disproportionate share hospital subsidy, other uncompensated care component of the disproportionate share hospital subsidy, hospital and other health care initiatives funding and the payments for subsidies for insurance premiums to provide care in disproportionate share hospitals, known as the Health Access New Jersey subsidy account, respectively.

e. In the event that the charity care component of the disproportionate share hospital subsidy account has a surplus in a given year after payments are distributed pursuant to the methodology established in section 13 of P.L.1995, c.133 (C.26:2H-18.59b) and section 7 of P.L.1996, c.28 (C.26:2H-18.59e) and within the limitations provided in subsection e. of section 9 of P.L.1992, c.160 (C.26:2H-18.59), the surplus monies in calendar years 1996 and 1997 shall lapse to the unemployment compensation fund established pursuant to R.S.43:21-9, and each year thereafter shall lapse to the charity care component of the disproportionate share hospital subsidy account for distribution in subsequent years.

4. Section 9 of P.L.1992, c.160 (C.26:2H-18.59) is amended to read as follows:
C.26:2H-18.59 Allocation of funds.

9. a. The commissioner shall allocate such funds as specified in subsection e. of this section to the charity care component of the disproportionate share hospital subsidy account. In a given year, the department shall transfer from the fund to the Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services in the Department of Human Services such funds as may be necessary for the total approved charity care disproportionate share payments to hospitals for that year.

b. For the period January 1, 1993 to December 31, 1993, the commission shall allocate $500 million to the charity care component of the disproportionate share hospital subsidy account. The Department of Health shall recommend the amount that the Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services shall pay to an eligible hospital on a provisional, monthly basis pursuant to paragraphs (1) and (2) of this subsection. The department shall also advise the commission and each eligible hospital of the amount a hospital is entitled to receive.

(1) The department shall determine if a hospital is eligible to receive a charity care subsidy in 1993 based on the following:

$$\frac{\text{Hospital Specific Approved Uncompensated Care-1991}}{\text{Hospital Specific Preliminary Cost Base-1992}} = \text{Hospital Specific \% Uncompensated Care (\%UC)}$$

A hospital is eligible for a charity care subsidy in 1993 if, upon establishing a rank order of the %UC for all hospitals, the hospital is among the 80% of hospitals with the highest %UC.

(2) The maximum amount of the charity care subsidy an eligible hospital may receive in 1993 shall be based on the following:

$$\frac{\text{Hospital Specific Approved Uncompensated Care-1991}}{\text{Total approved Uncompensated Care All Eligible Hospitals-1991}} \times \$500 \text{ million} = \text{Maximum Amount of Hospital Specific Charity Care Subsidy for 1993}$$

(3) A hospital shall be required to submit all claims for charity care cost reimbursement, as well as demographic information about the persons who qualify for charity care, to the department in a manner and time frame specified by the Commissioner of Health, in order to continue to be eligible for a charity care subsidy in 1993 and in subsequent years.

The demographic information shall include the recipient's age, sex, marital status, employment status, type of health insurance coverage, if any, and if the recipient is a child under 18 years of age who does not have health insurance coverage or a married person who does not have health insurance coverage, whether the child's parent or the married person's spouse, as the case may be, has health insurance.

(4) A hospital shall be reimbursed for the cost of eligible charity care at the same rate paid to that hospital by the Medicaid program; except that charity care services provided to emergency room patients who do not require those services on an emergency basis shall be reimbursed at a rate appropriate for primary care, according to a schedule of payments developed by the commission.

(5) The department shall provide for an audit of a hospital's charity care for 1993 within a time frame established by the department.

c. For the period January 1, 1994 to December 31, 1994, a hospital shall receive disproportionate share payments from the Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services based on the amount of charity care submitted to the commission or its designated agent, in a form and manner specified by the commission. The commission or its designated agent shall review and price all charity care claims and notify the Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services of the amount it shall pay to each hospital on a monthly basis based on actual services rendered.

(1) (Deleted by amendment, P.L.1995, c.133.)

(2) If the commission is not able to fully implement the charity care claims pricing system by January 1, 1994, the commission shall continue to make provisional disproportionate share payments to eligible hospitals, through the Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services, based on the charity care costs incurred by all hospitals in 1993, until such time as the commission is able to implement the claims pricing system.

If there are additional charity care balances available after the 1994 distribution based on 1993 charity care costs, the department shall transfer these available balances from the fund to the Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services for an approved one-time additional disproportionate share payment to hospitals according to the methodology provided in section 12 of P.L.1995, c.133 (C.26:2H-18.59a). The total payment for all hospitals shall not exceed $75.5 million.

(3) A hospital shall be reimbursed for the cost of eligible charity care at the same rate paid to that hospital by the Medicaid program; except that charity care services provided to emergency room patients who do not require those services on an emergency basis shall be reimbursed at a rate appropriate for primary care, according to a schedule of payments developed by the commission.

(4) (Deleted by amendment, P.L.1995, c.133.)

d. (Deleted by amendment, P.L.1995, c.133.)

e. The total amount allocated for charity care subsidy payments shall be: in 1994, $450 million ; in 1995, $400 million; in 1996, $310 million; and in 1997, $300 million. Total payments to hospitals shall not exceed the amount allocated for each given year.

f. Beginning January 1, 1995:

(1) The charity care subsidy shall be determined pursuant to section 13 of P.L.1995, c.133 (C.26:2H-18.59b).

(2) A charity care claim shall be valued at the same rate paid to that hospital by the Medicaid program, except that charity care services provided to emergency room patients who do not require those services on an emergency basis shall be valued at a rate appropriate for primary care according to a schedule of payments adopted by the commissioner.

(3) The department shall provide for an audit of a hospital's charity care within a time frame established by the commissioner.

5. Section 14 of P.L.1995, c.133 (C.26:2H-18.59c) is amended to read as follows:

C.26:2H-18.59c Submission of financial and demographic data.

14. All acute care hospitals licensed pursuant to P.L.1971, c.136 (C.26:2H-1 et al.) shall submit to the department all demographic and financial data specified in this section, in a manner and time frame specified by the commissioner.

a. A hospital shall submit demographic information about the persons who qualify for charity care or to whom the hospital provides uncompensated care, which includes, at a minimum: the individual's age, sex, marital status, employment status, type of health insurance coverage, if any, and if the individual is a child under 18 years of age who does not have health insurance coverage or a married person who does not have health insurance coverage, whether the child's parent or the married person's spouse, as the case may be, has health insurance.

b. A hospital shall submit all financial data required by the department for the purposes of calculating the payer mix factor as defined in sections 12 and 13 of P.L.1995, c.133 (C.26:2H-18.59a and C.26:2H-18.59b) and section 7 of P.L.1996, c.28 (C.26:2H-18.59e).

c. A hospital which fails to provide the information required pursuant to this section in a manner and time frame specified by the commissioner, shall be liable to a civil penalty not to exceed $1,000 for each day in which the hospital is not in compliance. The commissioner shall

recover the penalty in an administrative proceeding held pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410

(C.52:14B-1 et seq.).

6. Section 13 of P.L.1992, c.160 (C.26:2H-18.63) is amended to read as follows:

C.26:2H-18.63 Civil penalties for false statement, misrepresentation.

13. a. Any person or entity who makes a false statement or misrepresentation of a material fact in order to qualify any person or entity for any benefits to which he is not entitled under this act or P.L.1996, c.28 (C.26:2H-18.59e et al.), shall be liable to civil penalties of:

(1) payment of interest on the amount of the excess benefits or subsidy payments at the maximum legal rate in effect on the date the benefits were provided to the person or payment was made to the person or entity, for the period from the date upon which benefits were provided or payment was made to the date upon which repayment is made to the department; and

(2) payment of an amount not to exceed three times the amount of the excess benefit or subsidy payment.

b. A hospital which, without intent to violate this act, obtains a subsidy payment in excess of the amount to which it is entitled, shall be liable to a civil penalty of payment of interest on the amount of the excess payment at the maximum legal rate in effect on the date the payment was made to the hospital, from the date upon which payment was made to the date upon which repayment is made to the department, except that a hospital shall not be liable to the civil penalty when an excess subsidy payment is obtained by the hospital as a result of an error made by the department, as determined by the commissioner.

c. All interest and civil penalties provided for in this section shall be recovered in an administrative proceeding held pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.).

d. In order to satisfy any recovery claim asserted against a hospital under this section, whether or not that claim has been the subject of final agency adjudication, the commissioner is authorized to withhold subsidy payments otherwise payable under this act to the hospital.

C.26:2H-18.59e Determination of charity care subsidy for 1996 and 1997.

7. a. Beginning January 1, 1996 through December 31, 1997, and except as provided in section 8 of P.L.1996, c.28 (C.26:2H-18.59f), the charity care subsidy shall be determined according to the following methodology.

If the Statewide total of adjusted charity care is less than available charity care funding, a hospital's charity care subsidy shall equal its adjusted charity care.

If the Statewide total of adjusted charity care is greater than available charity care funding, then the hospital-specific charity care subsidy shall be determined by allocating available charity care funds so as to equalize hospital-specific payer mix factors to the Statewide target payer mix factor. Those hospitals with a payer mix factor greater than the Statewide target payer mix factor shall be eligible to receive a subsidy sufficient to reduce their factor to that Statewide level; those hospitals with a payer mix factor that is equal to or less than the Statewide target payer mix factor shall not be eligible to receive a subsidy.

Charity care subsidy payments shall be based upon actual documented hospital charity care.

As used in this section:

(1) The hospital-specific "documented charity care" shall be equal to the dollar amount of charity care provided by the hospital that is verified in the department's most recent charity care audit conducted under the most recent charity care eligibility rules adopted by the department and valued at the same rate paid to that hospital by the Medicaid program.

For 1996, documented charity care shall equal the audited, Medicaid-priced amounts reported for the first three quarters of 1995. This amount shall be multiplied by 1.33 to determine the annualized 1995 charity care amount. For 1997, documented charity care shall be equal to the audited Medicaid-priced amounts for the last quarter two years prior to the payment period and the first three quarters of the year prior to the payment period;

(2) In 1996, the hospital-specific "operating margin" shall be equal to: the hospital's 1993 and 1994 income from operations minus its 1993 and 1994 charity care subsidies divided by its 1993 and 1994 total operating revenue minus its 1993 and 1994 charity care subsidies. After calculating each hospital's operating margin, the department shall determine the Statewide

median operating margin.

In 1997, the hospital-specific "operating margin" shall be calculated in the same manner as for 1996, but on the basis of income from operations, total operating revenue and charity care subsidies data from the three most current years;

(3) The hospital-specific "profitability factor" shall be determined annually as follows. Those hospitals that are equal to or below the Statewide median operating margin shall be assigned a profitability factor of "1." For those hospitals that are above the Statewide median operating margin, the profitability factor shall be equal to:

$$1 - \frac{.75 \times (\text{hospital specific operating margin} - \text{Statewide median operating margin})}{\text{highest hospital specific operating margin} - \text{Statewide median operating margin}}$$

(4) The hospital-specific "adjusted charity care" shall be equal to a hospital's documented charity care times its profitability factor;

(5) The hospital-specific "revenue from private payers" shall be equal to the sum of the gross revenues, as reported to the department in the hospital's most recently available New Jersey Hospital Cost Reports for all non-governmental third party payers including, but not limited to, Blue Cross and Blue Shield plans, commercial insurers and health maintenance organizations;

(6) The hospital-specific "payer mix factor" shall be equal to a hospital's adjusted charity care divided by its revenue from private payers; and

(7) The "Statewide target payer mix factor" is the lowest payer mix factor to which all hospitals receiving charity care subsidies can be reduced by spending all available charity care subsidy funding for that year.

b. For the purposes of this section, "income from operations" and "total operating revenue" shall be defined by the department in accordance with financial reporting requirements established pursuant to N.J.A.C.8:31B-3.3.

c. Charity care subsidy payments shall commence on or after the date of enactment of P.L.1996, c.28 and the full calendar year 1996 allocation shall be disbursed by January 31, 1997.

C.26:2H-18.59f Implementation of health care program for low income residents.

8. Within 30 days of the date of enactment of P.L.1996, c.28, the Commissioner of Human Services, in consultation with the Commissioner of Health and the State Treasurer, shall pursue any necessary waivers from the federal Department of Health and Human Services in order to implement a health care program to provide low income residents of the State who qualify pursuant to section 10 of P.L.1992, c.160 (C.26:2H-18.60), with eligible charity care services on a managed care basis. The program shall be implemented by the Commissioner of Health in consultation with the Commissioner of Human Services and the State Treasurer.

a. The program shall be administered Statewide by one or more program administrators under contract with the State Treasurer pursuant to this section. For the purposes of this section, program administrator may include, but not be limited to, an acute care hospital which receives charity care reimbursements or a health maintenance organization.

b. The Commissioner of Health, in consultation with the Commissioner of Human Services and the State Treasurer, shall, within 30 days after approval of the federal waiver, and at appropriate intervals thereafter, solicit proposals from entities in the State interested in administering the health care program.

c. The contract shall include, but not be limited to, provisions for:

(1) providing charity care services on a managed care basis as specified by the Commissioner of Health, in consultation with the Commissioner of Human Services and the State Treasurer. An administrator shall be responsible for determining the most appropriate and cost-effective means of providing the health care services required by an eligible person and for directing the person to that means for receipt of the services;

(2) the determination of eligibility criteria for health care providers who choose to participate in the program;

(3) a methodology established by the Commissioner of Health for reimbursement of participating hospitals and other health care providers;

(4) the development and use of a uniform method for determining eligibility of State residents for health care services under the program; and

(5) the submission of quarterly reports to the Department of Health and the Department of the Treasury, in a form and manner required by the department, detailing expenditures of health care funds in the program.

The contract shall also provide that provider participation in the program shall ensure the maximum receipt by the State of federal disproportionate share monies pursuant to Pub.L.89-97 (42 U.S.C.§1396a et seq.) and Pub.L.102-234.

d. The Commissioner of Health shall report 12 months after the contract with the administrator or administrators is entered into by the State Treasurer and each year thereafter to the standing reference committees on health and appropriations of the Senate and General Assembly and the Governor on:

(1) expenditures related to the provision of health care services on a managed care basis, the number of persons served, the types of services provided, the hospitals participating in the program, the number and types of other health care providers participating in the program and such other information as may be required by the Legislature;

(2) the effectiveness of the program in containing or reducing costs for providing health care services to qualified low income residents of the State; and

(3) recommendations developed in consultation with the Commissioner of Human Services and the State Treasurer concerning additional cost containment actions that may be adopted for the provision of health care services to qualified low income persons.

e. Nothing in this section shall be construed to expand covered health care services to include services not covered by the charity care program in effect on the effective date of this act.

f. The implementation of the health care program pursuant to this section or other subsidies for charity care that affect the Medicaid State plan shall be contingent upon receipt of federal approvals that assure continuation of an acceptable level of federal Medicaid matching funds, including disproportionate share monies, as determined by the Director of the Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services in the Department of Human Services and the Director of the Division of Budget and Accounting in the Department of the Treasury.

C.26:2H-18.59g Establishment of technology infrastructure to support Statewide health care program.

9. The Commissioner of Health, in consultation with the State Treasurer, shall establish a technology infrastructure to support the Statewide health care program established pursuant to section 8 of P.L.1996, c.28 (C.26:2H-18.59f).

The State Treasurer, in consultation with the Commissioners of Health and Human Services may, if deemed to be in the State's best interests, include system features and provisions in the technology infrastructure to satisfy the requirements of multiple programs and purposes, including, but not limited to, programs such as, Medicaid, food stamps, public assistance, and purposes such as the exchange and consolidation of health care information permitted by law, eligibility and identity verification, claims processing, the use of electronic patient identification technology and electronic data interchange.

C.26:2H-18.58b Health Care Subsidy Fund payer of last resort; exemptions.

10. With the exception of the Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund, established pursuant to P.L.1987, c.370 (C.26:2-148 et seq.) and the Victims of Crime Compensation Board established pursuant to section 3 of P.L.1971, c.317 (C.52:4B-3), the Health Care Subsidy Fund is the payer of last resort for persons who otherwise qualify for charity care or managed health care services pursuant to P.L.1992, c.160 (C.26:2H-18.51 et al.) and P.L.1996, c.28. A hospital or other health care provider shall not submit a claim for charity care or managed health care services reimbursement on behalf of any individual otherwise eligible for charity care or managed health care services for whom the hospital or other health care provider is eligible to receive reimbursement under any State or federal program not specifically exempted in this section or any other third party payer.

C.26:2H-18.58c Funding of Health Care Subsidy Fund.

11. a. The Health Care Subsidy Fund shall be funded with $15 million in General Fund revenues in calendar year 1996 and $41 million in General Fund revenues in calendar year 1997.

b. In calendar year 1998, the Health Care Subsidy Fund shall be supported with revenues derived from efficiencies achieved by State use of an electronic data interchange system for health care claims and related information, in amounts necessary to provide funding for the health care program pursuant to section 8 of P.L.1996, c.28 (C.26:2H-18.59f).

12. a. The Commissioner of Health shall transfer to the Hospital Health Care Subsidy

account in the Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services of the Department of Human Services from the Health Care Subsidy Fund, $35 million in calendar year 1996 and $71 million in calendar year 1997, according to a schedule to be determined by the Commissioner of Health in consultation with the Commissioner of Human Services. These funds shall be distributed to eligible disproportionate share hospitals according to a methodology adopted by the Commissioner of Human Services pursuant to N.J.A.C.10:52-8.2, using hospital expenditure data for the most recent calendar year available for reimbursements from these funds.

b. In calendar years 1996 and 1997, the Governor shall recommend and the Legislature shall appropriate to the Hospital Health Care Subsidy account for distribution to disproportionate share hospitals which are eligible for reimbursement pursuant to subsection a. of this section, those federal funds received in connection with the provision of hospital reimbursements from that account.

13. R.S.43:21-7 is amended to read as follows:

Contributions.

43:21-7. Contributions. Employers other than governmental entities, whose benefit financing provisions are set forth in section 4 of P.L.1971, c.346 (C.43:21-7.3), and those nonprofit organizations liable for payment in lieu of contributions on the basis set forth in section 3 of P.L.1971, c.346 (C.43:21-7.2), shall pay to the controller for the unemployment compensation fund, contributions as set forth in subsections (a), (b) and (c) hereof, and the provisions of subsections (d) and (e) shall be applicable to all employers, consistent with the provisions of the "unemployment compensation law" and the "Temporary Disability Benefits Law," P.L.1948, c.110 (C.43:21-25 et seq.).

(a) Payment.

(1) Contributions shall accrue and become payable by each employer for each calendar year in which he is subject to this chapter (R.S.43:21-1 et seq.), with respect to having individuals in his employ during that calendar year, at the rates and on the basis hereinafter set forth. Such contributions shall become due and be paid by each employer to the controller for the fund, in accordance with such regulations as may be prescribed, and shall not be deducted, in whole or in part, from the remuneration of individuals in his employ.

(2) In the payment of any contributions, a fractional part of a cent shall be disregarded unless it amounts to $0.005 or more, in which case it shall be increased to $0.01.

(b) Rate of contributions. Each employer shall pay the following contributions:

(1) For the calendar year 1947, and each calendar year thereafter, 2 7/10% of wages paid by him during each such calendar year, except as otherwise prescribed by subsection (c) of this section.

(2) The "wages" of any individual, with respect to any one employer, as the term is used in this subsection (b) and in subsections (c), (d) and (e) of this section 7, shall include the first $4,800.00 paid during calendar year 1975, for services performed either within or without this State; provided that no contribution shall be required by this State with respect to services performed in another state if such other state imposes contribution liability with respect thereto. If an employer (hereinafter referred to as a successor employer) during any calendar year acquires substantially all the property used in a trade or business of another employer (hereinafter referred to as a predecessor), or used in a separate unit of a trade or business of a predecessor, and immediately after the acquisition employs in his trade or business an individual who immediately prior to the acquisition was employed in the trade or business of such predecessor, then, for the purpose of determining whether the successor employer has paid wages with respect to employment equal to the first $4,800.00 paid during calendar year 1975, any wages paid to such individual by such predecessor during such calendar year and prior to such acquisition shall be considered as having been paid by such successor employer.

(3) For calendar years beginning on and after January 1, 1976, the "wages" of any individual, as defined in the preceding paragraph (2) of this subsection (b), shall be established and promulgated by the Commissioner of Labor on or before September 1 of the preceding year and shall be 28 times the Statewide average weekly remuneration paid to workers by employers, as determined under R.S.43:21-3(c), raised to the next higher multiple of $100.00 if not already a multiple thereof, provided that if the amount of wages so determined for a calendar year is less

than the amount similarly determined for the preceding year, the greater amount will be used; provided, further, that if the amount of such wages so determined does not equal or exceed the amount of wages as defined in subsection (b) of section 3306 of the Federal Unemployment Tax Act, Chapter 23 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (26 U.S.C.§3306(b)), the wages as determined in this paragraph in any calendar year shall be raised to equal the amount established under the Federal Unemployment Tax Act for that calendar year.

(c) Future rates based on benefit experience.

(1) A separate account for each employer shall be maintained and this shall be credited with all the contributions which he has paid on his own behalf on or before January 31 of any calendar year with respect to employment occurring in the preceding calendar year; provided, however, that if January 31 of any calendar year falls on a Saturday or Sunday, an employer's account shall be credited as of January 31 of such calendar year with all the contributions which he has paid on or before the next succeeding day which is not a Saturday or Sunday. But nothing in this chapter (R.S.43:21-1 et seq.) shall be construed to grant any employer or individuals in his service prior claims or rights to the amounts paid by him into the fund either on his own behalf or on behalf of such individuals. Benefits paid with respect to benefit years commencing on and after January 1, 1953, to any individual on or before December 31 of any calendar year with respect to unemployment in such calendar year and in preceding calendar years shall be charged against the account or accounts of the employer or employers in whose employment such individual established base weeks constituting the basis of such benefits. Benefits paid under a given benefit determination shall be charged against the account of the employer to whom such determination relates. When each benefit payment is made, either a copy of the benefit check or other form of notification shall be promptly sent to the employer against whose account the benefits are to be charged. Such copy or notification shall identify the employer against whose account the amount of such payment is being charged, shall show at least the name and social security account number of the claimant and shall specify the period of unemployment to which said check applies. If the total amount of benefits paid to a claimant and charged to the account of the appropriate employer exceeds 50% of the total base year, base week wages paid to the claimant by that employer, then such employer shall have canceled from his account such excess benefit charges as specified above.

Each employer shall be furnished an annual summary statement of benefits charged to his account.

(2) Regulations may be prescribed for the establishment, maintenance, and dissolution of joint accounts by two or more employers, and shall, in accordance with such regulations and upon application by two or more employers to establish such an account, or to merge their several individual accounts in a joint account, maintain such joint account as if it constituted a single employer's account.

(3) No employer's rate shall be lower than 5.4% unless assignment of such lower rate is consistent with the conditions applicable to additional credit allowance for such year under section 3303(a)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (26 U.S.C.§3303(a)(1)), any other provision of this section to the contrary notwithstanding.

(4) Employer Reserve Ratio. (A) Each employer's rate shall be 2 8/10%, except as otherwise provided in the following provisions. No employer's rate for the 12 months commencing July 1 of any calendar year shall be other than 2 8/10%, unless as of the preceding January 31 such employer shall have paid contributions with respect to wages paid in each of the three calendar years immediately preceding such year, in which case such employer's rate for the 12 months commencing July 1 of any calendar year shall be determined on the basis of his record up to the beginning of such calendar year. If, at the beginning of such calendar year, the total of all his contributions, paid on his own behalf, for all past years exceeds the total benefits charged to his account for all such years, his contribution rate shall be:

(1) 2 5/10%, if such excess equals or exceeds 4%, but less than 5%, of his average annual payroll (as defined in paragraph (2), subsection (a) of R.S.43:21-19);

(2) 2 2/10%, if such excess equals or exceeds 5%, but is less than 6%, of his average annual payroll;

(3) 1 9/10%, if such excess equals or exceeds 6%, but is less than 7%, of his average annual payroll;

(4) 1 6/10%, if such excess equals or exceeds 7%, but is less than 8%, of his average annual

payroll;

(5) 1 3/10%, if such excess equals or exceeds 8%, but is less than 9%, of his average annual payroll;

(6) 1%, if such excess equals or exceeds 9%, but is less than 10%, of his average annual payroll;

(7) 7/10 of 1%, if such excess equals or exceeds 10%, but is less than 11%, of his average annual payroll;

(8) 4/10 of 1%, if such excess equals or exceeds 11% of his average annual payroll.

(B) If the total of an employer's contributions, paid on his own behalf, for all past periods for the purposes of this paragraph (4), is less than the total benefits charged against his account during the same period, his rate shall be:

(1) 4%, if such excess is less than 10% of his average annual payroll;

(2) 4 3/10%, if such excess equals or exceeds 10%, but is less than 20%, of his average annual payroll;

(3) 4 6/10%, if such excess equals or exceeds 20% of his average annual payroll.

(C) Specially assigned rates. If no contributions were paid on wages for employment in any calendar year used in determining the average annual payroll of an employer eligible for an assigned rate under this paragraph (4), the employer's rate shall be specially assigned as follows:

(i) if the reserve balance in its account is positive, its assigned rate shall be the highest rate in effect for positive balance accounts for that period, or 5.4%, whichever is higher, and (ii) if the reserve balance in its account is negative, its assigned rate shall be the highest rate in effect for deficit accounts for that period.

(D) The contribution rates prescribed by subparagraphs (A) and (B) of this paragraph (4) shall be increased or decreased in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (5) of this subsection (c) for experience rating periods through June 30, 1986.

(5) (A) Unemployment Trust Fund Reserve Ratio. If on March 31 of any calendar year the balance in the unemployment trust fund equals or exceeds 4% but is less than 7% of the total taxable wages reported to the controller as of that date in respect to employment during the preceding calendar year, the contribution rate, effective July 1 following, of each employer eligible for a contribution rate calculation based upon benefit experience, shall be increased by 3/10 of 1% over the contribution rate otherwise established under the provisions of paragraph (3) or (4) of this subsection. If on March 31 of any calendar year the balance of the unemployment trust fund exceeds 2 1/2% but is less than 4% of the total taxable wages reported to the controller as of that date in respect to employment during the preceding calendar year, the contribution rate, effective July 1 following, of each employer eligible for a contribution rate calculation based upon benefit experience, shall be increased by 6/10 of 1% over the contribution rate otherwise established under the provisions of paragraph (3) or (4) of this subsection.

If on March 31 of any calendar year the balance of the unemployment trust fund is less than 2 1/2% of the total taxable wages reported to the controller as of that date in respect to employment during the preceding calendar year, the contribution rate, effective July 1 following, of each employer (1) eligible for a contribution rate calculation based upon benefit experience, shall be increased by (i) 6/10 of 1% over the contribution rate otherwise established under the provisions of paragraph (3), (4)(A) or (4)(B) of this subsection, and (ii) an additional amount equal to 20% of the total rate established herein, provided, however, that the final contribution rate for each employer shall be computed to the nearest multiple of 1/10% if not already a multiple thereof; (2) not eligible for a contribution rate calculation based upon benefit experience, shall be increased by 6/10 of 1% over the contribution rate otherwise established under the provisions of paragraph (4) of this subsection. For the period commencing July 1, 1984 and ending June 30, 1986, the contribution rate for each employer liable to pay contributions under R.S.43:21-7 shall be increased by a factor of 10% computed to the nearest multiple of 1/10% if not already a multiple thereof.

(B) If on March 31 of any calendar year the balance in the unemployment trust fund equals or exceeds 10% but is less than 12 1/2% of the total taxable wages reported to the controller as of that date in respect to employment during the preceding calendar year, the contribution rate, effective July 1 following, of each employer eligible for a contribution rate calculation based upon benefit experience, shall be reduced by 3/10 of 1% under the contribution rate otherwise established under the provisions of paragraphs (3) and (4) of this subsection; provided that in

no event shall the contribution rate of any employer be reduced to less than 4/10 of 1%. If on March 31 of any calendar year the balance in the unemployment trust fund equals or exceeds 12 1/2% of the total taxable wages reported to the controller as of that date in respect to employment during the preceding calendar year, the contribution rate, effective July 1 following, of each employer eligible for a contribution rate calculation based upon benefit experience, shall be reduced by 6/10 of 1% if his account for all past periods reflects an excess of contributions paid over total benefits charged of 3% or more of his average annual payroll, otherwise by 3/10 of 1% under the contribution rate otherwise established under the provisions of paragraphs (3) and (4) of this subsection; provided that in no event shall the contribution rate of any employer be reduced to less than 4/10 of 1%.

(C) The "balance" in the unemployment trust fund, as the term is used in subparagraphs (A) and (B) above, shall not include moneys credited to the State's account under section 903 of the Social Security Act, as amended (42 U.S.C.§1103), during any period in which such moneys are appropriated for the payment of expenses incurred in the administration of the "unemployment compensation law."

(D) Prior to July 1 of each calendar year the controller shall determine the Unemployment Trust Reserve Ratio, which shall be calculated by dividing the balance of the unemployment trust fund as of the prior March 31 by total taxable wages reported to the controller by all employers as of March 31 with respect to their employment during the last calendar year.

(E)(i) With respect to experience rating years beginning on or after July 1, 1986 and before July 1, 1997, the new employer rate or the unemployment experience rate of an employer under this section shall be the rate which appears in the column headed by the Unemployment Trust Fund Reserve Ratio as of the applicable calculation date and on the line with the Employer Reserve Ratio, as defined in paragraph 4 of this subsection (R.S.43:21-7 (c)(4)), as set forth in the following table:

EXPERIENCE RATING TAX TABLE

Fund Reserve Ratio[1]

Employer Reserve Ratio[2]	10.00% and Over A	7.00% to 9.99% B	4.00% to 6.99% C	2.50% to 3.99% D	2.49% and Under E
Positive Reserve Ratio:					
17% and over	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	1.2
16.00% to 16.99%	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.6	1.2
15.00% to 15.99%	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.7	1.2
14.00% to 14.99%	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	1.2
13.00% to 13.99%	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.2
12.00% to 12.99%	0.6	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.2
11.00% to 11.99%	0.7	0.8	1.0	1.1	1.2
10.00% to 10.99%	0.9	1.1	1.3	1.5	1.6
9.00% to 9.99%	1.0	1.3	1.6	1.7	1.9
8.00% to 8.99%	1.3	1.6	1.9	2.1	2.3
7.00% to 7.99%	1.4	1.8	2.2	2.4	2.6
6.00% to 6.99%	1.7	2.1	2.5	2.8	3.0
5.00% to 5.99%	1.9	2.4	2.8	3.1	3.4
4.00% to 4.99%	2.0	2.6	3.1	3.4	3.7
3.00% to 3.99%	2.1	2.7	3.2	3.6	3.9
2.00% to 2.99%	2.2	2.8	3.3	3.7	4.0
1.00% to 1.99%	2.3	2.9	3.4	3.8	4.1
0.00% to 0.99%	2.4	3.0	3.6	4.0	4.3
Deficit Reserve Ratio:					
-0.00% to -2.99%	3.4	4.3	5.1	5.6	6.1
-3.00% to -5.99%	3.4	4.3	5.1	5.7	6.2
-6.00% to -8.99%	3.5	4.4	5.2	5.8	6.3
-9.00% to-11.99%	3.5	4.5	5.3	5.9	6.4
-12.00%to-14.99%	3.6	4.6	5.4	6.0	6.5
-15.00%to-19.99%	3.6	4.6	5.5	6.1	6.6
-20.00%to-24.99%	3.7	4.7	5.6	6.2	6.7
-25.00%to-29.99%	3.7	4.8	5.6	6.3	6.8
-30.00%to-34.99%	3.8	4.8	5.7	6.3	6.9
-35.00% and under	5.4	5.4	5.8	6.4	7.0
New Employer Rate	2.8	2.8	2.8	3.1	3.4

[1]Fund balance as of March 31 as a percentage of taxable wages in the prior calendar year.
[2]Employer Reserve Ratio (Contributions minus benefits as a percentage of employer's taxable wages).

(ii) With respect to experience rating years beginning on or after July 1, 1997, the new employer rate or the unemployment experience rate of an employer under this section shall be the rate which appears in the column headed by the Unemployment Trust Fund Reserve Ratio as of the applicable calculation date and on the line with the Employer Reserve Ratio, as defined in paragraph 4 of this subsection (R.S.43:21-7 (c)(4)), as set forth in the following table:

EXPERIENCE RATING TAX TABLE

Fund Reserve Ratio[1]

Employer Reserve Ratio[2]	6.00% and Over A	4.00% to 5.99% B	3.00% to 3.99% C	2.50% to 2.99% D	2.49% and Under E
Positive Reserve Ratio:					
17% and over	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	1.2
16.00% to 16.99%	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.6	1.2
15.00% to 15.99%	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.7	1.2
14.00% to 14.99%	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	1.2
13.00% to 13.99%	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.2
12.00% to 12.99%	0.6	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.2
11.00% to 11.99%	0.7	0.8	1.0	1.1	1.2
10.00% to 10.99%	0.9	1.1	1.3	1.5	1.6
9.00% to 9.99%	1.0	1.3	1.6	1.7	1.9
8.00% to 8.99%	1.3	1.6	1.9	2.1	2.3
7.00% to 7.99%	1.4	1.8	2.2	2.4	2.6
6.00% to 6.99%	1.7	2.1	2.5	2.8	3.0
5.00% to 5.99%	1.9	2.4	2.8	3.1	3.4
4.00% to 4.99%	2.0	2.6	3.1	3.4	3.7
3.00% to 3.99%	2.1	2.7	3.2	3.6	3.9
2.00% to 2.99%	2.2	2.8	3.3	3.7	4.0
1.00% to 1.99%	2.3	2.9	3.4	3.8	4.1
0.00% to 0.99%	2.4	3.0	3.6	4.0	4.3
Deficit Reserve Ratio:					
-0.00% to -2.99%	3.4	4.3	5.1	5.6	6.1
-3.00% to -5.99%	3.4	4.3	5.1	5.7	6.2
-6.00% to -8.99%	3.5	4.4	5.2	5.8	6.3
-9.00% to-11.99%	3.5	4.5	5.3	5.9	6.4
-12.00%to-14.99%	3.6	4.6	5.4	6.0	6.5
-15.00%to-19.99%	3.6	4.6	5.5	6.1	6.6
-20.00%to-24.99%	3.7	4.7	5.6	6.2	6.7
-25.00%to-29.99%	3.7	4.8	5.6	6.3	6.8
-30.00%to-34.99%	3.8	4.8	5.7	6.3	6.9
-35.00% and under	5.4	5.4	5.8	6.4	7.0
New Employer Rate	2.8	2.8	2.8	3.1	3.4

[1]Fund balance as of March 31 as a percentage of taxable wages in the prior calendar year.
[2]Employer Reserve Ratio (Contributions minus benefits as a percentage of employer's taxable wages).

(F)(i) With respect to experience rating years beginning on or after July 1, 1986 and before July 1, 1997, if the balance of the unemployment trust fund as of the prior March 31 is negative, the contribution rate for each employer liable to pay contributions, as computed under subparagraph E of this paragraph (5), shall be increased by a factor of 10% computed to the nearest multiple of 1/10% if not already a multiple thereof.

(ii) With respect to experience rating years beginning on or after July 1, 1997, if the fund reserve ratio, based on the fund balance as of the prior March 31, is less than 1.00%, the contribution rate for each employer liable to pay contributions, as computed under subparagraph E of this paragraph (5), shall be increased by a factor of 10% computed to the nearest multiple of 1/10% if not already a multiple thereof.

(G) On or after January 1, 1993, notwithstanding any other provisions of this paragraph (5), the contribution rate for each employer liable to pay contributions, as computed under subparagraph (E) of this paragraph (5), shall be decreased by 0.1%, except that, during any experience rating year in which the fund reserve ratio is equal to or greater than 7.00%, there shall be no decrease pursuant to this subparagraph (G) in the contribution of any employer who has a deficit reserve ratio of negative 35.00% or under.

(H) On or after January 1, 1993 until December 31, 1993, notwithstanding any other provisions of this paragraph (5), the contribution rate for each employer liable to pay contributions, as computed under subparagraph (E) of this paragraph (5), shall be decreased by a factor of 52.0% computed to the nearest multiple of 1/10%, except that, if an employer has a

deficit reserve ratio of negative 35.0% or under, the employer's rate of contribution shall not be reduced pursuant to this subparagraph (H) to less than 5.4%. The amount of the reduction in the employer contributions stipulated by this subparagraph (H) shall be in addition to the amount of the reduction in the employer contributions stipulated by subparagraph (G) of this paragraph (5), except that the rate of contribution of an employer who has a deficit reserve ratio of negative 35.0% or under shall not be reduced pursuant to this subparagraph (H) to less than 5.4% and the rate of contribution of any other employer shall not be reduced to less than 0.0%.

On or after January 1, 1994 until December 31, 1995, except as provided pursuant to subparagraph (I) of this paragraph (5), notwithstanding any other provisions of this paragraph (5), the contribution rate for each employer liable to pay contributions, as computed under subparagraph (E) of this paragraph (5), shall be decreased by a factor of 36.0% computed to the nearest multiple of 1/10%, except that, if an employer has a deficit reserve ratio of negative 35.0% or under, the employer's rate of contribution shall not be reduced pursuant to this subparagraph (H) to less than 5.4%. The amount of the reduction in the employer contributions stipulated by this subparagraph (H) shall be in addition to the amount of the reduction in the employer contributions stipulated by subparagraph (G) of this paragraph (5), except that the rate of contribution of an employer who has a deficit reserve ratio of negative 35.0% or under shall not be reduced pursuant to this subparagraph (H) to less than 5.4% and the rate of contribution of any other employer shall not be reduced to less than 0.0%.

On or after April 1, 1996 until December 31, 1996, the contribution rate for each employer liable to pay contributions, as computed under subparagraph (E) of this paragraph (5), shall be decreased by a factor of 25.0% computed to the nearest multiple of 1/10%, except that, if an employer has a deficit reserve ratio of negative 35.0% or under, the employer's rate of contribution shall not be reduced pursuant to this subparagraph (H) to less than 5.4%. The amount of the reduction in the employer contributions stipulated by this subparagraph (H) shall be in addition to the amount of the reduction in the employer contributions stipulated by subparagraph (G) of this paragraph (5), except that the rate of contribution of an employer who has a deficit reserve ratio of negative 35.0% or under shall not be reduced pursuant to this subparagraph (H) to less than 5.4% and the rate of contribution of any other employer shall not be reduced to less than 0.0%.

On or after January 1, 1997 until December 31, 1997, the contribution rate for each employer liable to pay contributions, as computed under subparagraph (E) of this paragraph (5), shall be decreased by a factor of 10.0% computed to the nearest multiple of 1/10%, except that, if an employer has a deficit reserve ratio of negative 35.0% or under, the employer's rate of contribution shall not be reduced pursuant to this subparagraph (H) to less than 5.4%. The amount of the reduction in the employer contributions stipulated by this subparagraph (H) shall be in addition to the amount of the reduction in the employer contributions stipulated by subparagraph (G) of this paragraph (5), except that the rate of contribution of an employer who has a deficit reserve ratio of negative 35.0% or under shall not be reduced pursuant to this subparagraph (H) to less than 5.4% and the rate of contribution of any other employer shall not be reduced to less than 0.0%.

(I) If the fund reserve ratio decreases to a level of less than 4.00% on March 31 of calendar year 1994 or calendar year 1995, the provisions of subparagraph (H) of this paragraph (5) shall cease to be in effect as of July 1 of that calendar year.

If, upon calculating the unemployment compensation fund reserve ratio pursuant to R.S.43:21-7(c)(5)(D) prior to March 31, 1997, the controller finds that the fund reserve ratio has decreased to a level of less than 3.00%, the Commissioner of Labor shall notify the State Treasurer of this fact and of the dollar amount necessary to bring the fund reserve ratio up to a level of 3.00%. The State Treasurer shall, prior to March 31, 1997, transfer from the General Fund to the unemployment compensation fund, revenues in the amount specified by the commissioner and which, upon deposit in the unemployment compensation fund, shall result, upon recalculation, in a fund reserve ratio used to determine employer contributions beginning July 1, 1997, of at least 3.00%.

If, upon calculating the unemployment compensation fund reserve ratio pursuant to R.S.43:21-7(c)(5)(D) prior to March 31, 1998, the controller finds that the fund reserve ratio has decreased to a level of less than 3.00%, the Commissioner of Labor shall notify the State Treasurer of this fact and of the dollar amount necessary to bring the fund reserve ratio up to

a level of 3.00%. The State Treasurer shall, prior to March 31, 1998, transfer from the General Fund to the unemployment compensation fund, revenues in the amount specified by the commissioner and which, upon deposit in the unemployment compensation fund, shall result, upon recalculation, in a fund reserve ratio used to determine employer contributions beginning July 1, 1998 of at least 3.00%.

(6) Additional contributions.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any employer who has been assigned a contribution rate pursuant to subsection (c) of this section for the year commencing July 1, 1948, and for any year commencing July 1 thereafter, may voluntarily make payment of additional contributions, and upon such payment shall receive a recomputation of the experience rate applicable to such employer, including in the calculation the additional contribution so made. Any such additional contribution shall be made during the 30-day period following the date of the mailing to the employer of the notice of his contribution rate as prescribed in this section, unless, for good cause, the time for payment has been extended by the controller for not to exceed an additional 60 days; provided that in no event may such payments which are made later than 120 days after the beginning of the year for which such rates are effective be considered in determining the experience rate for the year in which the payment is made. Any employer receiving any extended period of time within which to make such additional payment and failing to make such payment timely shall be, in addition to the required amount of additional payment, a penalty of 5% thereof or $5.00, whichever is greater, not to exceed $50.00. Any adjustment under this subsection shall be made only in the form of credits against accrued or future contributions.

(7) Transfers.

(A) Upon the transfer of the organization, trade or business, or substantially all the assets of an employer to a successor in interest, whether by merger, consolidation, sale, transfer, descent or otherwise, the controller shall transfer the employment experience of the predecessor employer to the successor in interest, including credit for past years, contributions paid, annual payrolls, benefit charges, et cetera, applicable to such predecessor employer, pursuant to regulation, if it is determined that the employment experience of the predecessor employer with respect to the organization, trade, assets or business which has been transferred may be considered indicative of the future employment experience of the successor in interest. Unless the predecessor employer was owned or controlled (by legally enforceable means or otherwise), directly or indirectly, by the successor in interest, or the predecessor employer and the successor in interest were owned or controlled (by legally enforceable means or otherwise), directly or indirectly, by the same interest or interests, the transfer of the employment experience of the predecessor shall not be effective if such successor in interest, within four months of the date of such transfer of the organization, trade, assets or business, or thereafter upon good cause shown, files a written notice protesting the transfer of the employment experience of the predecessor employer.

(B) An employer who transfers part of his or its organization, trade, assets or business to a successor in interest, whether by merger, consolidation, sale, transfer, descent or otherwise, may jointly make application with such successor in interest for transfer of that portion of the employment experience of the predecessor employer relating to the portion of the organization, trade, assets or business transferred to the successor in interest, including credit for past years, contributions paid, annual payrolls, benefit charges, et cetera, applicable to such predecessor employer. The transfer of employment experience may be allowed pursuant to regulation only if it is found that the employment experience of the predecessor employer with respect to the portion of the organization, trade, assets or business which has been transferred may be considered indicative of the future employment experience of the successor in interest. Credit shall be given to the successor in interest only for the years during which contributions were paid by the predecessor employer with respect to that part of the organization, trade, assets or business transferred.

(C) A transfer of the employment experience in whole or in part having become final, the predecessor employer thereafter shall not be entitled to consideration for an adjusted rate based upon his or its experience or the part thereof, as the case may be, which has thus been transferred. A successor in interest to whom employment experience or a part thereof is transferred pursuant to this subsection shall, as of the date of the transfer of the organization,

trade, assets or business, or part thereof, immediately become an employer if not theretofore an employer subject to this chapter (R.S.43:21-1 et seq.).

(d) Contributions of workers to the unemployment compensation fund and the State disability benefits fund.

(1) (A) For periods after January 1, 1975, each worker shall contribute to the fund 1% of his wages with respect to his employment with an employer, which occurs on and after January 1, 1975, after such employer has satisfied the condition set forth in subsection (h) of R.S.43:21-19 with respect to becoming an employer; provided, however, that such contributions shall be at the rate of 1/2 of 1% of wages paid with respect to employment while the worker is in the employ of the State of New Jersey, or any governmental entity or instrumentality which is an employer as defined under R.S.43:21-19(h)(5), or is covered by an approved private plan under the "Temporary Disability Benefits Law" or while the worker is exempt from the provisions of the "Temporary

Disability Benefits Law" under section 7 of that law, P.L.1948, c.110 (C.43:21-31).

(B) Effective January 1, 1978 there shall be no contributions by workers in the employ of any governmental or nongovernmental employer electing or required to make payments in lieu of contributions unless the employer is covered by the State plan under the "Temporary Disability Benefits Law" (C.43:21-37 et seq.), and in that case contributions shall be at the rate of 1/2 of 1%, except that commencing July 1, 1986, workers in the employ of any nongovernmental employer electing or required to make payments in lieu of contributions shall be required to make contributions to the fund at the same rate prescribed for workers of other nongovernmental employers.

(C) (i) Notwithstanding the above provisions of this paragraph (1), during the period starting July 1, 1986 and ending December 31, 1992, each worker shall contribute to the fund 1.125% of wages paid with respect to his employment with a governmental employer electing or required to pay contributions or nongovernmental employer, including a nonprofit organization which is an employer as defined under R.S.43:21-19(h)(6), regardless of whether that nonprofit organization elects or is required to finance its benefit costs with contributions to the fund or by payments in lieu of contributions, after that employer has satisfied the conditions set forth in subsection R.S.43:21-19(h) with respect to becoming an employer. Contributions, however, shall be at the rate of 0.625% while the worker is covered by an approved private plan under the "Temporary Disability Benefits Law" while the worker is exempt under section 7 of that law, P.L.1948, c.110 (C.43:21-31) or any other provision of that law; provided that such contributions shall be at the rate of 0.625% of wages paid with respect to employment with the State of New Jersey or any other governmental entity or instrumentality electing or required to make payments in lieu of contributions and which is covered by the State plan under the "Temporary Disability Benefits Law," except that, while the worker is exempt from the provisions of the "Temporary Disability Benefits Law" under section 7 of that law, P.L.1948, c.110 (C.43:21-31) or any other provision of that law, or is covered for disability benefits by an approved private plan of the employer, the contributions to the fund shall be 0.125%.

(ii) (Deleted by amendment, P.L.1995, c.422.)

(D) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this paragraph (1), during the period starting January 1, 1993 and ending June 30, 1994, each worker shall contribute to the unemployment compensation fund 0.5% of wages paid with respect to the worker's employment with a governmental employer electing or required to pay contributions or nongovernmental employer, including a nonprofit organization which is an employer as defined under paragraph (6) of subsection (h) of R.S.43:21-19, regardless of whether that nonprofit organization elects or is required to finance its benefit costs with contributions to the fund or by payments in lieu of contributions, after that employer has satisfied the conditions set forth in subsection (h) of R.S.43:21-19 with respect to becoming an employer. No contributions, however, shall be made by the worker while the worker is covered by an approved private plan under the "Temporary Disability Benefits Law," P.L.1948, c.110 (C.43:21-25 et seq.) or while the worker is exempt under section 7 of P.L.1948, c.110 (C.43:21-31) or any other provision of that law; provided that the contributions shall be at the rate of 0.50% of wages paid with respect to employment with the State of New Jersey or any other governmental entity or instrumentality electing or required to make payments in lieu of contributions and which is covered by the State plan under the "Temporary Disability Benefits Law," except that, while the worker is exempt from the provisions of the "Temporary Disability Benefits Law" under section 7 of that law, P.L.1948, c.110 (C.43:21-31) or any other provision of that law, or is covered for disability benefits by an approved private plan of the employer, no contributions shall be made to the fund.

Each worker shall, starting on January 1, 1996 and ending March 31, 1996, contribute to the unemployment compensation fund 0.60% of wages paid with respect to the worker's employment with a governmental employer electing or required to pay contributions or nongovernmental employer, including a nonprofit organization which is an employer as defined under paragraph (6) of subsection (h) of R.S.43:21-19, regardless of whether that nonprofit organization elects or is required to finance its benefit costs with contributions to the fund or by payments in lieu of contributions, after that employer has satisfied the conditions set forth in subsection (h) of R.S.43:21-19 with respect to becoming an employer, provided that the contributions shall be at the rate of 0.10% of wages paid with respect to employment with the State of New Jersey or any other governmental entity or instrumentality electing or required to make payments in lieu of

contributions.

Each worker shall, starting on January 1, 1998 contribute to the unemployment compensation fund 0.40% of wages paid with respect to the worker's employment with a governmental employer electing or required to pay contributions or nongovernmental employer, including a nonprofit organization which is an employer as defined under paragraph (6) of subsection (h) of R.S.43:21-19, regardless of whether that nonprofit organization elects or is required to finance its benefit costs with contributions to the fund or by payments in lieu of contributions, after that employer has satisfied the conditions set forth in subsection (h) of R.S.43:21-19 with respect to becoming an employer, provided that the contributions shall be at the rate of 0.10% of wages paid with respect to employment with the State of New Jersey or any other governmental entity or instrumentality electing or required to make payments in lieu of contributions.

(E) Each employer shall, notwithstanding any provision of law in this State to the contrary, withhold in trust the amount of his workers' contributions from their wages at the time such wages are paid, shall show such deduction on his payroll records, shall furnish such evidence thereof to his workers as the division or controller may prescribe, and shall transmit all such contributions, in addition to his own contributions, to the office of the controller in such manner and at such times as may be prescribed. If any employer fails to deduct the contributions of any of his workers at the time their wages are paid, or fails to make a deduction therefor at the time wages are paid for the next succeeding payroll period, he alone shall thereafter be liable for such contributions, and for the purpose of R.S.43:21-14, such contributions shall be treated as employer's contributions required from him.

(F) As used in this chapter (R.S.43:21-1 et seq.), except when the context clearly requires otherwise, the term "contributions" shall include the contributions of workers pursuant to this section.

(G) Each worker shall, starting on July 1, 1994, contribute to the State disability benefits fund an amount equal to 0.50% of wages paid with respect to the worker's employment with a government employer electing or required to pay contributions to the State disability benefits fund or nongovernmental employer, including a nonprofit organization which is an employer as defined under paragraph (6) of subsection (h) of R.S. 43:21-19, unless the employer is covered by an approved private disability plan or is exempt from the provisions of the "Temporary Disability Benefits Law," P.L.1948 c.110 (C.43:21-25 et seq.) under section 7 of that law (C.43:21-31) or any other provision of that law.

(2) (A) (Deleted by amendment, P.L.1984, c.24.)

(B) (Deleted by amendment, P.L.1984, c.24.)

(C) (Deleted by amendment, P.L.1994, c.112.)

(D) (Deleted by amendment, P.L.1994, c.112.)

(E) (i) (Deleted by amendment, P.L.1994, c.112.)

(ii) (Deleted by amendment, P.L.1996, c.28).

(iii) (Deleted by amendment, P.L.1994, c.112.)

(3) If an employee receives wages from more than one employer during any calendar year, and either the sum of his contributions deposited in and credited to the State disability benefits fund plus the amount of his contributions, if any, required towards the costs of benefits under one or more approved private plans under the provisions of section 9 of the "Temporary Disability Benefits Law" (C.43:21-33) and deducted from his wages, or the sum of such latter contributions, if the employee is covered during such calendar year only by two or more private plans, exceeds an amount equal to 1/2 of 1% of the "wages" determined in accordance with the provisions of R.S.43:21-7(b)(3) during the calendar years beginning on or after January 1, 1976, the employee shall be entitled to a refund of the excess if he makes a claim to the controller within two years after the end of the calendar year in which the wages are received with respect to which the refund is claimed and establishes his right to such refund. Such refund shall be made by the controller from the State disability benefits fund. No interest shall be allowed or paid with respect to any such refund. The controller shall, in accordance with prescribed regulations, determine the portion of the aggregate amount of such refunds made during any calendar year which is applicable to private plans for which deductions were made under section 9 of the "Temporary Disability Benefits Law," such determination to be based upon the ratio of the amount of such wages exempt from contributions to such fund, as provided in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (1) of this subsection with respect to coverage under private plans, to the total

wages so exempt plus the amount of such wages subject to contributions to the disability benefits fund, as provided in subparagraph (G) of paragraph (1) of this subsection. The controller shall, in accordance with prescribed regulations, prorate the amount so determined among the applicable private plans in the proportion that the wages covered by each plan bear to the total private plan wages involved in such refunds, and shall assess against and recover from the employer, or the insurer if the insurer has indemnified the employer with respect thereto, the amount so prorated. The provisions of R.S.43:21-14 with respect to collection of employer contributions shall apply to such assessments. The amount so recovered by the controller shall be paid into the State disability benefits fund.

(4) If an individual does not receive any wages from the employing unit which for the purposes of this chapter (R.S.43:21-1 et seq.) is treated as his employer, or receives his wages from some other employing unit, such employer shall nevertheless be liable for such individual's contributions in the first instance; and after payment thereof such employer may deduct the amount of such contributions from any sums payable by him to such employing unit, or may recover the amount of such contributions from such employing unit, or, in the absence of such an employing unit, from such individual, in a civil action; provided proceedings therefor are instituted within three months after the date on which such contributions are payable. General rules shall be prescribed whereby such an employing unit may recover the amount of such contributions from such individuals in the same manner as if it were the employer.

(5) Every employer who has elected to become an employer subject to this chapter (R.S.43:21-1 et seq.), or to cease to be an employer subject to this chapter (R.S.43:21-1 et seq.), pursuant to the provisions of R.S.43:21-8, shall post and maintain printed notices of such election on his premises, of such design, in such numbers, and at such places as the director may determine to be necessary to give notice thereof to persons in his service.

(6) Contributions by workers, payable to the controller as herein provided, shall be exempt from garnishment, attachment, execution, or any other remedy for the collection of debts.

(e) Contributions by employers to State disability benefits fund.

(1) Except as hereinafter provided, each employer shall, in addition to the contributions required by subsections (a), (b), and (c) of this section, contribute 1/2 of 1% of the wages paid by such employer to workers with respect to employment unless he is not a covered employer as defined in section 3 of the "Temporary Disability Benefits Law" (C.43:21-27 (a)), except that the rate for the State of New Jersey shall be 1/10 of 1% for the calendar year 1980 and for the first six months of 1981. Prior to July 1, 1981 and prior to July 1 each year thereafter, the controller shall review the experience accumulated in the account of the State of New Jersey and establish a rate for the next following fiscal year which, in combination with worker contributions, will produce sufficient revenue to keep the account in balance; except that the rate so established shall not be less than 1/10 of 1%. Such contributions shall become due and be paid by the employer to the controller for the State disability benefits fund as established by law, in accordance with such regulations as may be prescribed, and shall not be deducted, in whole or in part, from the remuneration of individuals in his employ. In the payment of any contributions, a fractional part of a cent shall be disregarded unless it amounts to $0.005 or more, in which case it shall be increased to $0.01.

(2) During the continuance of coverage of a worker by an approved private plan of disability benefits under the "Temporary Disability Benefits Law," the employer shall be exempt from the contributions required by subparagraph (1) above with respect to wages paid to such worker.

(3) (A) The rates of contribution as specified in subparagraph (1) above shall be subject to modification as provided herein with respect to employer contributions due on and after July 1, 1951.

(B) A separate disability benefits account shall be maintained for each employer required to contribute to the State disability benefits fund and such account shall be credited with contributions deposited in and credited to such fund with respect to employment occurring on and after January 1, 1949. Each employer's account shall be credited with all contributions paid on or before January 31 of any calendar year on his own behalf and on behalf of individuals in his service with respect to employment occurring in preceding calendar years; provided, however, that if January 31 of any calendar year falls on a Saturday or Sunday an employer's account shall be credited as of January 31 of such calendar year with all the contributions which he has paid on or before the next succeeding day which is not a Saturday or Sunday. But

nothing in this act shall be construed to grant any employer or individuals in his service prior claims or rights to the amounts paid by him to the fund either on his own behalf or on behalf of such individuals. Benefits paid to any covered individual in accordance with Article III of the "Temporary Disability Benefits Law" on or before December 31 of any calendar year with respect to disability in such calendar year and in preceding calendar years shall be charged against the account of the employer by whom such individual was employed at the commencement of such disability or by whom he was last employed, if out of employment.

(C) The controller may prescribe regulations for the establishment, maintenance, and dissolution of joint accounts by two or more employers, and shall, in accordance with such regulations and upon application by two or more employers to establish such an account, or to merge their several individual accounts in a joint account, maintain such joint account as if it constituted a single employer's account.

(D) Prior to July 1 of each calendar year, the controller shall make a preliminary determination of the rate of contribution for the 12 months commencing on such July 1 for each employer subject to the contribution requirements of this subsection (e).

(1) Such preliminary rate shall be 1/2 of 1% unless on the preceding January 31 of such year such employer shall have been a covered employer who has paid contributions to the State disability benefits fund with respect to employment in the three calendar years immediately preceding such year.

(2) If the minimum requirements in (1) above have been fulfilled and the credited contributions exceed the benefits charged by more than $500.00, such preliminary rate shall be as follows:

(i) 2/10 of 1% if such excess over $500.00 exceeds 1% but is less than 1 1/4% of his average annual payroll (as defined in this chapter (R.S.43:21-1 et seq.));

(ii) 15/100 of 1% if such excess over $500.00 equals or exceeds 1 1/4% but is less than 1 1/2% of his average annual payroll;

(iii) 1/10 of 1% if such excess over $500.00 equals or exceeds 1 1/2% of his average annual payroll.

(3) If the minimum requirements in (1) above have been fulfilled and the contributions credited exceed the benefits charged but by not more than $500.00 plus 1% of his average annual payroll, or if the benefits charged exceed the contributions credited but by not more than $500.00, the preliminary rate shall be 1/4 of 1%.

(4) If the minimum requirements in (1) above have been fulfilled and the benefits charged exceed the contributions credited by more than $500.00, such preliminary rate shall be as follows:

(i) 35/100 of 1% if such excess over $500.00 is less than 1/4 of 1% of his average annual payroll;

(ii) 45/100 of 1% if such excess over $500.00 equals or exceeds 1/4 of 1% but is less than 1/2 of 1% of his average annual payroll;

(iii) 55/100 of 1% if such excess over $500.00 equals or exceeds 1/2 of 1% but is less than 3/4 of 1% of his average annual payroll;

(iv) 65/100 of 1% if such excess over $500.00 equals or exceeds 3/4 of 1% but is less than 1% of his average annual payroll;

(v) 75/100 of 1% if such excess over $500.00 equals or exceeds 1% of his average annual payroll.

(5) Determination of the preliminary rate as specified in (2), (3) and (4) above shall be subject, however, to the condition that it shall in no event be decreased by more than 1/10 of 1% of wages or increased by more than 2/10 of 1% of wages from the preliminary rate determined for the preceding year in accordance with (1), (2), (3) or (4), whichever shall have been applicable.

(E) (1) Prior to July 1 of each calendar year the controller shall determine the amount of the State disability benefits fund as of December 31 of the preceding calendar year, increased by the contributions paid thereto during January of the current calendar year with respect to employment occurring in the preceding calendar year. If such amount exceeds the net amount withdrawn from the unemployment trust fund pursuant to section 23 of the "Temporary Disability Benefits Law," P.L.1948, c.110 (C.43:21-47) plus the amount at the end of such preceding calendar year of the unemployment disability account (as defined in section 22 of said

law (C.43:21-46)), such excess shall be expressed as a percentage of the wages on which contributions were paid to the State disability benefits fund on or before January 31 with respect to employment in the preceding calendar year.

(2) The controller shall then make a final determination of the rates of contribution for the 12 months commencing July 1 of such year for employers whose preliminary rates are determined as provided in (D) hereof, as follows:

(i) If the percentage determined in accordance with paragraph (E)(1) of this subsection equals or exceeds 1 1/4%, the final employer rates shall be the preliminary rates determined as provided in (D) hereof, except that if the employer's preliminary rate is determined as provided in (D)(2) or (D)(3) hereof, the final employer rate shall be the preliminary employer rate decreased by such percentage of excess taken to the nearest 5/100 of 1%, but in no case shall such final rate be less than 1/10 of 1%.

(ii) If the percentage determined in accordance with paragraph (E)(1) of this subsection equals or exceeds 3/4 of 1% and is less than 1 1/4 of 1%, the final employer rates shall be the preliminary employer rates.

(iii) If the percentage determined in accordance with paragraph (E)(1) of this subsection is less than 3/4 of 1%, but in excess of 1/4 of 1%, the final employer rates shall be the preliminary employer rates determined as provided in (D) hereof increased by the difference between 3/4 of 1% and such percentage taken to the nearest 5/100 of 1%; provided, however, that no such final rate shall be more than 1/4 of 1% in the case of an employer whose preliminary rate is determined as provided in (D)(2) hereof, more than 1/2 of 1% in the case of an employer whose preliminary rate is determined as provided in (D)(1) and (D)(3) hereof, nor more than 3/4 of 1% in the case of an employer whose preliminary rate is determined as provided in (D)(4) hereof.

(iv) If the amount of the State disability benefits fund determined as provided in paragraph (E)(1) of this subsection is equal to or less than 1/4 of 1%, then the final rate shall be 2/5 of 1% in the case of an employer whose preliminary rate is determined as provided in (D)(2) hereof, 7/10 of 1% in the case of an employer whose preliminary rate is determined as provided in (D)(1) and (D)(3) hereof, and 1.1% in the case of an employer whose preliminary rate is determined as provided in (D)(4) hereof. Notwithstanding any other provision of law or any determination made by the controller with respect to any 12-month period commencing on July 1, 1970, the final rates for all employers for the period beginning January 1, 1971, shall be as set forth herein.

14. Section 29 of P.L.1992, c.160 (C.43:21-7b) is amended to read as follows:

C.43:21-7b Contributions to Health Care Subsidy Fund.

29. a. Beginning January 1, 1993 until December 31, 1995, except as provided pursuant to subsection b. of this section, each employee shall, in such a manner and at such times as determined by the commissioner, contribute to the fund an amount equal to 0.6% of the employee's taxable wages.

Beginning April 1, 1996 through December 31, 1996, each employee shall, in such a manner and at such times as determined by the commissioner, contribute to the fund an amount equal to 0.6% of the employee's taxable wages, except that the total amount contributed to the fund when combined with the employee's contribution made pursuant to R.S.43:31-7(d)(1)(D) for the period January 1, 1996 through March 31, 1996, shall not exceed 0.6% of the employee's taxable wages for the 1996 calendar year.

Beginning January 1, 1997 through December 31, 1997, each employee shall, in such a manner and at such times as determined by the commissioner, contribute to the fund an amount equal to 0.5% of the employee's taxable wages.

Also beginning on January 1, 1993 until December 31, 1995 and beginning April 1, 1996 until December 31, 1997, each employer shall, in such a manner and at such times as determined by the commissioner, contribute to the fund an amount equal to the amount that the employer's contribution to the unemployment compensation fund is decreased pursuant to subparagraph (H) of paragraph (5) of subsection (c) of R.S.43:21-7.

b. If the unemployment compensation fund reserve ratio, as determined pursuant to paragraph (5) of subsection (c) of R.S.43:21-7, decreases to a level of less than 4.00% on March 31 of calendar year 1994 or calendar year 1995, the provisions of subsection a. of this section shall cease to be in effect as of July 1 of that calendar year and each employer who would be

subject to making the contributions pursuant to subsection a. of this section if that subsection were in effect shall, beginning on July 1 of that calendar year, contribute to the fund an amount equal to 0.62% of the total wages paid by the employer and shall continue to contribute that amount until December 31, 1995.

c. If the total amount of contributions to the fund pursuant to this section during the calendar year 1993 exceeds $600 million, all contributions which exceed $600 million shall be deposited in the unemployment compensation fund. If the total amount of contributions to the fund pursuant to this section during calendar year 1994 or calendar year 1995 exceeds $500 million, all contributions which exceed $500 million shall be deposited in the unemployment compensation fund. If the total amount of contributions made to the fund pursuant to this section for the calendar year 1996 or 1997 exceeds $330 million, all contributions which exceed $330 million in calendar year 1996 or 1997 shall be deposited in the unemployment compensation fund.

d. All necessary administrative costs related to the collection of contributions pursuant to this section shall be paid from the contributions.

15. Section 32 of P.L.1992, c.160 (C.43:21-7e) is amended to read as follows:

C.43:21-7e Entitlement to refund or tax credit.

32. a. If an employee receives wages from more than one employer during any calendar year, and the sum of the employee's contributions deposited in the fund exceeds an amount equal to 0.6% of the wages determined in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (3) of subsection (b) of R.S.43:21-7 during calendar year 1993, calendar year 1994 or calendar year 1995, the employee shall be entitled to a refund of the excess if a claim establishing the employee's right to the refund is made within two years after the end of the respective calendar year in which the wages are received and are the subject of the claim. The commissioner shall refund any overpayment from the fund without interest.

If an employee receives wages from more than one employer during the calendar year 1996 and the sum of the employee's contributions deposited in the unemployment compensation fund during the period January 1, 1996 through March 31, 1996 and the employee's contributions deposited in the health care subsidy fund during the period April 1, 1996 through December 31, 1996 exceeds an amount equal to 0.6% of the wages determined in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (3) of subsection (b) of R.S.43:21-7 which wages are received during the period January 1, 1996 through December 31, 1996, the employee shall be entitled to a refund of the excess if a claim establishing the employee's right to the refund is made within two years after the end of the respective calendar year in which the wages are received and are the subject of the claim. The commissioner shall refund any overpayment without interest from the unemployment compensation fund or the health care subsidy fund, or both, as appropriate.

If an employee receives wages from more than one employer during the calendar year 1997, and the sum of the employee's contributions deposited in the fund exceeds an amount equal to 0.5% of the wages determined in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (3) of subsection (b) of R.S.43:21-7 during calendar year 1997, the employee shall be entitled to a refund of the excess if a claim establishing the employee's right to the refund is made within two years after the end of the respective calendar year in which the wages are received and are the subject of the claim. The commissioner shall refund any overpayment from the fund without interest.

b. Any employee who is a taxpayer and entitled, pursuant to the provisions of subsection a. of this section, to a refund of contributions deducted during a tax year from his wages shall, in lieu of the refund, be entitled to a credit in the full amount thereof against the tax otherwise due on his New Jersey gross income for that tax year if he submits his claim for the credit and accompanies that claim with evidence of his right to the credit in the manner provided by regulation by the Director of the Division of Taxation. In any case in which the amount, or any portion thereof, of any credit allowed hereunder results in or increases an excess of income tax payment over income tax liability, the amount of the new or increased excess shall be considered an overpayment and shall be refunded to the taxpayer in the manner provided by subsection (a) of N.J.S.54A:9-7.

16. Section 4 of P.L.1971, c.346 (C.43:21-7.3) is amended to read as follows:

C.43:21-7.3 Governmental entities.

4. (a) Notwithstanding any other provisions of the "unemployment compensation law" for the payment of contributions, benefits paid to individuals based upon wages earned in the employ of any governmental entity or instrumentality which is an employer defined under R.S.43:21-19(h)(5) shall, to the extent that such benefits are chargeable to the account of such governmental entity or instrumentality in accordance with the provisions of R.S.43:21-1 et seq., be financed by payments in lieu of contributions.

(b) Any governmental entity or instrumentality may, as an alternative to financing benefits by payments in lieu of contributions, elect to pay contributions beginning with the date on which its subjectivity begins by filing written notice of its election with the department no later than 120 days after such subjectivity begins, provided that such election shall be effective for at least two full calendar years; or it may elect to pay contributions for a period of not less than two calendar years beginning January 1 of any year if written notice of such election is filed with the department not later than February 1 of such year; provided, further, that such governmental entity or instrumentality shall remain liable for payments in lieu of contributions with respect to all benefits paid based on base year wages earned in the employ of such entity or instrumentality in

the period during which it financed its benefits by payments in lieu of contributions.

(c) Any governmental entity or instrumentality may terminate its election to pay contributions as of January 1 of any year by filing written notice not later than February 1 of any year with respect to which termination is to become effective. It may not revert to a contributions method of financing for at least two full calendar years after such termination.

(d) Any governmental entity or instrumentality electing the option for contributions financing shall report and pay contributions in accordance with the provisions of R.S.43:21-7 except that, notwithstanding the provisions of that section, the contribution rate for such governmental entity or instrumentality shall be 1% for the entire calendar year 1978 and the contribution rate for any subsequent calendar years shall be the rate established for governmental entities or instrumentalities under subsection (e) of this section.

(e) On or before September 1 of each year, the Commissioner of Labor shall review the composite benefit cost experience of all governmental entities and instrumentalities electing to pay contributions and, on the basis of that experience, establish the contribution rate for the next following calendar year which can be expected to yield sufficient revenue in combination with worker contributions to equal or exceed the projected costs for that calendar year.

(f) Any covered governmental entity or instrumentality electing to pay contributions shall each year appropriate, out of its general funds, moneys to pay the projected costs of benefits at the rate determined under subsection (e) of this section. These funds shall be held in a trust fund maintained by the governmental entity for this purpose. Any surplus remaining in this trust fund may be retained in reserve for payment of benefit costs for subsequent years either by contributions or payments in lieu of contributions.

(g) Any governmental entity or instrumentality electing to finance benefit costs with payments in lieu of contributions shall pay into the fund an amount equal to all benefit costs for which it is liable pursuant to the provisions of the "unemployment compensation law." Each subject governmental entity or instrumentality shall require payments from its workers in the same manner and amount as prescribed under R.S.43:21-7(d) for governmental entities and instrumentalities financing their benefit costs with contributions. No such payment shall be used for a purpose other than to meet the benefits liability of such governmental entity or instrumentality. In addition, each subject governmental entity or instrumentality shall appropriate out of its general funds sufficient moneys which, in addition to any worker payments it requires, are necessary to pay its annual benefit costs estimated on the basis of its past benefit cost experience; provided that for its first year of coverage, its benefit costs shall be deemed to require an appropriation equal to 1% of the projected total of its taxable wages for the year. These appropriated moneys and worker payments shall be held in a trust fund maintained by the governmental entity or instrumentality for this purpose. Any surplus remaining in this trust fund shall be retained in reserve for payment of benefit costs in subsequent years. If a governmental entity or instrumentality requires its workers to make payments as authorized herein, such workers shall not be subject to the contributions required in R.S.43:21-7(d).

(h) Notwithstanding the provisions of the above subsection (g), commencing July 1, 1986 worker contributions to the unemployment trust fund with respect to wages paid by any governmental entity or instrumentality electing or required to make payments in lieu of contributions, including the State of New Jersey, shall be made in accordance with the provisions of R.S.43:21-7(d)(1)(C) or R.S.43:21-7(d)(1)(D), as applicable, and, in addition, each governmental entity or instrumentality electing or required to make payments in lieu of contributions shall, except during the period starting January 1, 1993 and ending December 31, 1995 and the period starting April 1, 1996 and ending December 31, 1997 or, if the unemployment compensation fund reserve ratio, as determined pursuant to paragraph (5) of subsection (c) of R.S.43:21-7, decreases to a level of less than 4.00% on March 31 of calendar year 1994 or calendar year 1995, ending July 1 of that calendar year, require payments from its workers at the following rates of wages paid, which amounts are to be held in the trust fund maintained by the governmental entity or instrumentality for payment of benefit costs: for calendar year 1998 and each calendar year thereafter, 0.30%.

(cf: P.L1992, c.205, s.1)

17. Section 1 of P.L.1944, c.81 (C.43:21-14.1) is amended to read as follows:

C.43:21-14.1 Refund of contributions; claim.

1. Any employee who is paid wages by two or more employers aggregating more than the amount of "wages" determined in accordance with the provisions of R.S.43:21-7(b)(3) shall be entitled to a refund of the amount of contributions deducted from such wages and paid to the Division of Employment Security in excess of the contribution which is determined pursuant to R.S.43:21-7(d)(1)(D) required on the amount of "wages" determined in accordance with the provisions of R.S.43:21-7(b)(3) except that no such refund shall be made unless the employee makes a claim, establishing his right thereto, within two years after the calendar year in which the wages are paid with respect to which refund of contribution is claimed. No interest shall be allowed or paid with respect to any such refund.

18. This act shall take effect immediately and shall be retroactive to January 1, 1996.

Approved May 16, 1996.