

SENATE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 1547

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: NOVEMBER 4, 1996

The Senate Human Services Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 1547 with committee amendments.

As amended by the committee, this bill requires all patients who are admitted for treatment at State psychiatric hospitals to submit to blood testing, upon admission, for hepatitis B, HIV infection, and other sexually transmitted diseases, as determined by the Commissioner of Human Services. More extensive testing and examination to determine the presence of sexually transmitted diseases or stages of such diseases shall be performed within 90 days of a patient's admission or may be performed sooner, as appropriate to the patient's psychiatric condition.

Also, all employees at a State psychiatric hospital shall be trained how to interact with a patient who has hepatitis B, HIV infection or any sexually transmitted disease. No employee shall be required to interact with a patient with any of these diseases unless so trained. Any employee who may come in contact with a patient who has any of these diseases shall be given advance notice, to the extent possible, that the patient has one of these diseases.

The bill requires the Commissioner of Human Services to develop guidelines for the treatment and confinement of a patient who tests positive to any disease specified in the bill, in consultation with the Commissioner of Health and Senior Services, and in accordance with recommended protocols established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the United States Public Health Service.

This bill is one of several legislative initiatives recommended in the final report of the Senate Task Force on Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital issued in June, 1996.

The committee amended the bill to require blood testing upon a patient's admission and to require more extensive testing and examination within 90 days or sooner, as appropriate to the patient's condition. Committee amendments also provide that employees shall be trained how to interact with a patient who has hepatitis B, HIV infection or any sexually transmitted disease. No employee shall be required to interact with a patient with any of these diseases unless so

trained. Also, any employee who may come in contact with a patient infected with these diseases shall be given advance notice, to the extent possible.