SENATE HEALTH COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 1783

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 23, 1997

The Senate Health Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 1783.

This bill requires health insurers, including hospital service corporations, medical service corporations, health service corporations, commercial insurers and health maintenance organizations, to provide insurance coverage for the costs associated with all stages of reconstructive breast surgery that may be necessary following breast cancer surgery, including symmetry operations on the opposite breast. Insurers and health maintenance organizations are required under current law to provide prostheses and, under any contract for health care services providing outpatient x-ray or radiation therapy, outpatient chemotherapy following surgical procedures in connection with the treatment of breast cancer as a part of the outpatient x-ray or radiation therapy.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in American women, afflicting 182,000 women per year, striking one out of nine and causing the death of 46,000 women a year.

This bill is identical to Assembly Committee Substitute for Assembly Bill Nos. 2550 and 11 (Heck/Vandervalk), which is pending before the General Assembly.