

ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 1058

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 17, 2021

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 1058 (1R).

This bill requires the Commissioner of Human Services or the commissioner's designee to develop a training program that is designed to prevent and eliminate discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression in the delivery of services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and intersex senior citizens in the State. The bill requires that the training program be developed no later than nine months following the bill's enactment.

The training program is to be designed to increase awareness among, and provide cultural competency to, service providers and their employees about the issues encountered by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and intersex seniors, in order to both ensure equal access to services for senior citizens and improve the delivery of those services to senior citizens and caregivers in the State.

The bill provides that each person who is licensed or certified to provide services or supports to senior citizens, and who contracts with, provides services through programs administered by, or receives funding from, the Department of Human Services (DHS), any of its divisions, or any area agency on aging must complete the training program within six months after the program is made available or within one month after commencing the delivery of services or supports to senior citizens in the State, whichever is later. Each service provider who is required to undergo training would also be required to ensure that each staff member employed thereby completes the anti-discrimination training program, either within six months after the program is made available or within one month after the staff member commences employment with the provider, whichever is later.

The DHS would be required to make the training program available online, by webinar, or by other means and would further be required to establish a protocol to ensure that service providers comply with the bill's provisions.

The bill would take effect immediately upon enactment.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) concludes that the Department of Human Services (DHS) will incur one-time expenses in developing and publishing a discrimination prevention training program for certain providers of services to senior citizens, as described under the bill. This fiscal estimate assumes that the program will be made available in a digital format, as authorized under the bill, thereby minimizing staff costs to implement the program. To the extent that the department does not possess the staff expertise to develop the program, such expenses will increase in relationship to the department's reliance on outside entities.

The OLS is unable to determine the cost to the department to implement a protocol ensuring provider compliance with the bill, as the bill authorizes the department to establish the system following the bill's enactment.

The OLS concludes that nursing homes operated by certain county governments who contract with the department to provide services to Medicaid beneficiaries will experience an indeterminate increase in expenses to comply with the training requirements under the bill.