

ASSEMBLY HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 2285

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: AUGUST 10, 2020

The Assembly Human Services Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 2285.

This bill establishes a standard medical expense deduction for certain senior citizens under the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (NJ SNAP), formerly known as the Food Stamp Program. Specifically, this bill requires the Division of Family Development in the Department of Human Services to implement a standard medical expense deduction for the purposes of determining income eligibility under NJ SNAP for any household that includes a senior citizen. "Senior citizen" is defined to include any individual who is 60 years of age or older by the last day of the month in which the application for NJ SNAP benefits is submitted.

Under the bill, a household that includes a senior citizen is to be entitled to a standard medical expense deduction in an amount agreed upon by the Department of Human Services and the United States Department of Agriculture, provided that the amount of actual costs of allowable medical expenses incurred by the senior citizen for a month, exclusive of special diets, is equal to or greater than \$35 and does not include any expenses paid on behalf of the household by a third party. If the amount of actual costs of allowable medical expenses incurred by the senior citizen for a month, exclusive of special diets, is greater than the established standard medical deduction, then the medical expense deduction is to be equal to the amount of those actual costs.

Under the bill, allowable medical expenses means an allowable medical expense as defined in 7 U.S.C. s.2012(c), which includes expenditures for: (1) medical and dental care; (2) hospitalization or nursing care; (3) prescription drugs, when prescribed by a licensed practitioner authorized under State law, and over-the-counter medication (including insulin), when approved by a licensed practitioner or other qualified health professional; (4) health and hospitalization insurance policies; (5) Medicare premiums; (6) dentures, hearing aids, and prosthetics; (7) eye glasses prescribed by a physician skilled in eye disease or by an optometrist; (8) reasonable costs of transportation necessary to secure medical treatment or services; and (9) maintaining an attendant, homemaker, home health aide, housekeeper, or child care services due to age, infirmity, or illness.

The bill requires the Commissioner of Human Services to apply to the Food and Nutrition Service within in the United States Department of Agriculture for any necessary waivers or approvals to implement a standard medical expense deduction under NJ SNAP.

The bill will take effect no later than the beginning of federal fiscal year 2021, pending approval from the United States Department of Agriculture, but the Commissioner of Human Services may take anticipatory administrative action in advance of the effective date as necessary to implement the bill's provisions.