

SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR CITIZENS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO **SENATE, No. 3975**

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: NOVEMBER 8, 2021

The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 3975.

As amended by the committee, this bill requires all infants born in the State to be tested for congenital cytomegalovirus infection (cCMV). The testing requirement will be contingent on the development and approval by both federal and State authorities of a cCMV test and the State acquiring the equipment necessary to conduct the test as part of its existing newborn screening program.

Cytomegalovirus (CMV) is a common viral infection that is spread through bodily fluids like saliva, blood, semen, urine, and breast milk. The virus is mostly harmless and rarely causes illness. If a pregnant person is infected with CMV, that person can pass it to a developing infant, causing the cCMV infection. The virus affects one in every 200 newborns, or approximately 30,000 infants born each year, making it the most common congenital viral infection in the United States. Furthermore, one in every five children born with cCMV will develop permanent health problems, and as many as 400 infants die every year as a result of the disease.

The bill stipulates that the Commissioner of Health may charge a reasonable fee, as determined by the commissioner, and may increase the fee as is reasonable and necessary, for the test performed pursuant to the bill.

The bill also requires the commissioner to establish a public awareness campaign to educate pregnant persons about cytomegalovirus (CMV) and cCMV and the value of early detection of, interventions for, and possible treatments for, CMV and cCMV. The program is provide information and educational materials to pregnant persons on CMV and cCMV including, but not limited to: (1) the cause and nature of CMV and cCMV; (2) diagnostic procedures and appropriate indications for their use; (3) lifestyle issues relating to how a pregnant person can pass cCMV to a developing fetus; and (4) the availability of CMV and cCMV diagnostic and treatment services in the community.

The commissioner is to prepare, and make available on the Department of Health's Internet website, in English and Spanish, and in a manner that is easily understandable by a pregnant person, information about the symptoms and treatment of CMV and cCMV and any other information that the commissioner deems to be necessary. This information may be revised by the department whenever new information about CMV and cCMV becomes available.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments revise the bill to require that, as a condition of requiring newborn screening for CMV and cCMV, the Newborn Screening Advisory Review Committee recommend the test be included in the State's Newborn Screening Program, and the Commissioner of Health approve its inclusion based on that recommendation.

The committee amendments make a technical revision to clarify the Commissioner of Health's authority to establish and increase fees for CMV and cCMV screenings.