

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Signs Prescription Drug Bill to Limit Out-of-Pocket Prescription Drug Expenses for New Jersey Families

01/21/2020

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today signed legislation (A2431) to help limit out-of-pocket prescription drug expenses for New Jersey families. The bill, which requires health insurers to provide plans that limit patient cost-sharing concerning prescription drug coverage, will improve affordability and access for those who require necessary medication.

“Few issues have a greater financial impact on New Jersey families than the unpredictable and ever-increasing cost of prescription drugs,” **said Governor Murphy**. “Cost-sharing too often presents a barrier to a patient’s ability to access medically-necessary treatments. This legislation will improve the affordability of medical care for many residents who unfortunately must make sacrifices in order to pay for their required medications.”

Primary sponsors of the legislation include Assemblymembers Daniel Benson, Angelica Jimenez, BettyLou DeCroce, and Tim Eustace, and Senators Loretta Weinberg and Thomas Kean, Jr.

“Now more than ever, the need for this law is critical,” **said Assemblyman Benson**. “Increasingly, health plans are imposing a serious financial burden on patients whose diseases and conditions are treated by so-called ‘specialty’ medications. That burden usually comes in the form of coinsurance, which can leave enrollees of health care plans left to pay thousands of dollars for one month’s supply of a specialty medication. It is absolutely unacceptable that nearly every health plan available on the Healthcare.gov ([https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://t.e2ma.net/click/zc66sc/j83xrcb/vhz5ti__;!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtbA!https://www.healthcare.gov/\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://t.e2ma.net/click/zc66sc/j83xrcb/vhz5ti__;!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtbA!https://www.healthcare.gov/$)) marketplace features co-payments of between 40-50 percent for ‘specialty’ medications which are life-sustaining drugs for those who take them. We can and will do better for the people of New Jersey.”

“Many of the individuals who face high copayments, coinsurance or deductibles are already suffering with difficult and expensive health issues,” **said Assemblywoman Jimenez**. “Some of these individuals, although they have insurance, cannot afford the exorbitant out-of-pocket expenses them for their much-needed prescription medications. We can do more to help residents with prescription costs with this new law.”

“The state of our current healthcare system is untenable. Health insurance loses its value if the doctor prescribed medication is unaffordable. For patients with chronic conditions in particular, out-of-pocket costs can range into the thousands of dollars each month, putting both their health and their livelihood in jeopardy,” **said Senator Weinberg**. “This law, however, is going to improve affordability and therefore access to vital medication. I’m glad, with the Governor’s signature, that New Jersey is taking a step to help keep costs down and keep people from having to choose between their basic needs like food or housing and their necessary medicine.”

“Patients should never have to make the impossible choice between paying for medicine and paying for necessities like groceries or rent. New Jerseyans who depend on expensive drugs to manage chronic conditions now know there will be health plans that serve their unique needs,” **said Jennifer McGarry, New Jersey Advocacy Director for The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and Chair of a Coalition of 25 patient and health care provider organizations that advocates for affordable health care in New Jersey**. “We commend the leadership of Assemblyman Daniel Benson and Senator Loretta Weinberg for their commitment to protecting patients. We are grateful to Governor Phil Murphy for supporting this critical, bipartisan legislation, which will improve the lives of many New Jerseyans.”

“I’ve seen firsthand the devastating financial toll chronic illness can take on families,” **said Jana Boyer, Executive Director of the New Jersey chapter of The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society**. “This law will make it easier for New Jersey residents to afford the prescription drugs they require in order to stay healthy and live productive lives. On behalf of New Jersey families affected by blood cancer, we’re grateful for Governor Phil Murphy’s support of this critical, bipartisan legislation. Patients who’ve faced extraordinary costs for their medicine will now have access to health insurance plans that better suit their needs.”

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