

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Signs Legislation to Expand Telehealth Access and Expedite Licensure of Out-of-State Professionals

03/19/2020

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today signed legislation (A3680 and A3682) to expand access to telehealth services and to allow professional and occupational licensing board to expedite licensure of out-of-state professionals.

“Telehealth is crucial in order to allow as many New Jerseyans as possible to get the medical services they need during this crisis,” **said Governor Murphy**. “Through the expansion of telehealth services as well as the waiving of licensure requirements for out-of-state professionals, we will be able to accept assistance from both in-state and from out-of-state more easily and allow residents to get the help they require.”

A3860 authorizes any health care practitioners to provide telemedicine and telehealth services for the duration of the public health emergency declared by Governor Murphy and directs the Commissioner of Health and the Director of Consumer Affairs to waive any requirements in law or regulation necessary to facilitate the provision of healthcare services using telemedicine and telehealth during the emergency.

Primary sponsors of A3860 include Assemblymembers Nancy Pinkin, BettyLou DeCroce, and Daniel R. Benson, and Senators Joseph Vitale and James Holzapfel.

In a joint statement, Assemblymembers Pinkin, DeCroce, and Benson said:

“The steady spread of the coronavirus threatens the viability of health-care delivery in New Jersey and across the country. This bill would ensure that health care providers are able to continue tending to patients from the safety of their homes to protect both the public and, even more critically, front-line health workers.

“Widespread access to telemedicine and telehealth services will also provide concerned citizens with access to reliable medical information and allow them to obtain needed services remotely as hospitals and urgent care centers deal with increasing caseloads. As we continue to promote the necessity of social distancing, we must take steps to ensure that everyone – including those with chronic health conditions – is able to safely the access the care they need.”

“Together we are going to take care of our sick, feed and help house our underserved communities, support our workers and our businesses and take swift and determined action to protect New Jerseyans,” **said Senator Joseph Vitale, the Chair of the Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee**. “This pandemic is unprecedented. The legislation shows that that we are all in this together and it is our collective action that will ultimately determine the severity of the impact this public health emergency will have on the State of New Jersey and on the nation.”

“The highly infectious coronavirus wreaking havoc in our state presents a unique and troubling threat to our healthcare network,” **said Senator Jim Holzapfel**. “Telemedicine is a tested method that has shown much promise in diagnosing and treating illness without requiring any face-to-face interaction between the patient and caregiver. It is a proven alternative to office visits and crowded waiting rooms filled with sick people, and

a way to prevent dangerously over-loading the system. Authorizing any health care professional to treat patients remotely during this public health emergency makes good sense, and I'm thankful the Legislature and the Governor have acted quickly to approve and enact my bill as law."

A3862 further expands access to health care during a declared state of emergency by allowing professional and occupational licensing boards to expedite licensure of out-of-state professionals during a state of emergency or a public health emergency. An individual applying for a specific license, certificate of registration or certification in New Jersey must have a corresponding license, certificate of registration or certification in another state in order to be eligible for expedited licensure. The legislation gives the Director of Consumer Affairs and the applicable licensing board the ability to temporarily waive licensing fees and certain licensing requirements.

Primary sponsors of A3862 include Assemblymembers Thomas P. Giblin, John Armato, and Eric Houghtaling, and Senators Nellie Pou and Thomas H. Kean, Jr.

In a joint statement, Assembly sponsors Giblin, Armato, and Houghtaling said:

"Although we hope that the statewide restrictions being implemented will help slow the spread of this virus, we must prepare for the possibility of an influx of COVID-19 cases that require hospitalization.

"As such, now is the time to welcome any healthcare providers who are able and willing to come to New Jersey to help our residents. Expediting licenses for professionals who have not worked in New Jersey due to the licensure process will help us do just that.

"This legislation anticipates the need for their assistance and applies temporary measures that will make it easier for them to receive the necessary licensure."

"Across the country we are seeing hospitals struggle to find enough doctors and nurses to care for patients in critical care amidst the coronavirus pandemic," **said Senator Nellie Pou.** "This legislation will make it easier to bring qualified professionals into the state to help residents access the care they need as well as alleviate the strain on our healthcare system as it combats this crisis."

"During a time of emergency such as we are facing due to COVID-19, it is imperative that we continue to have individuals in important professions available to serve the people of New Jersey," **said Senate Minority Leader Tom Kean, Jr.** "Streamlining the professional and occupational licensing process in the fashion prescribed by this legislation will eliminate red tape and help highly skilled and trained workers who are already licensed in other states get to work quickly in the Garden State."

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