

# YOUR MONTHLY UPDATE FROM TRENTON

## FOR NEW JERSEY'S THIRD LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT



September 2020

### Sweeney Legislation Expanding Benefits to Essential Workers Becomes Law

Legislation championed by Senate President Sweeney expanding workers' compensation benefits for essential workers who contract COVID-19 on the job has been signed into law.



"The men and women who are on the front lines protecting our health and safety and providing the vital services we all need during this crisis must be assured that they have basic worker protections and that they can get workers' compensation if they fall ill to the coronavirus. We need to ensure that they can go to work with the knowledge that these benefits will be there if they need them," said Sweeney.

The law creates a presumption that coronavirus infections contracted by essential employees who interact with the public, including health care and public safety workers, are job-related for the purpose of determining employment benefits for work-related injuries and illnesses, including workers' compensation. It would cover workers in the public and private sectors.

Deputy Speaker Burzichelli, who co-sponsored the legislation in the Assembly, said, "Essential employees have been critical to our state's COVID-19 response. Nurses, police officers, EMTs and so many other workers on the frontlines of this pandemic risk exposure to this deadly virus every day as they provide indispensable services to New Jersey residents. We must do all we can to help, as they have helped us."

### Proposal to Save Constituents on Rx Medications



Senate President Sweeney co-authored legislation that will provide major savings on prescription drug costs in the Medicaid program and improve the quality of care by identifying risks that can lead to adverse drug effects.

"As prescription drug prices continue to rise, we must push for new initiatives to control Medicaid costs. Putting the proper controls in place can save tens of millions of dollars while improving the quality of care."

The legislation would require the following:

- ◆ The New Jersey Department of Human Services to contract with a third party to apply a risk reduction model to prescription drug services under the Medicaid program.
- ◆ The New Jersey Department of Treasury to determine the most cost-effective way to administer and procure prescription drug services in the Medicaid program through a single entity. Right now, the benefit is administered by 5 separate pharmacy benefit managers that have contracts with five managed care organizations.

A healthcare technology company estimates that New Jersey will generate annual cost savings in excess of \$80 million if such a model is applied to the Medicaid program.

### Nourishment for Our Neighbors in Their Time of Need

The Third Legislative District was proud to team up with Touch New Jersey Food Pantry in co-sponsoring a [food drive](#) for constituents.

Assemblyman Adam Taliaferro joined the Gloucester County Freeholders and other partners to distribute 12 pallets of food, which was provided to nearly 600 residents.

If you require emergency food assistance,

you may contact Touch New Jersey Food Pantry by [clicking here](#).



### LEGISLATIVE NEWS & NOTES

- ▶ Senate President Sweeney [announced](#) the state will provide CARES Act funding for the reopening of 26 Sheltered Workshop programs throughout the state. Sheltered Workshop programs provide employment, job, and skills training to people with disabilities. Statewide, there are 26 programs operating 28 sites. All have been closed since early March as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ▶ Senate President Steve Sweeney's [legislation](#) to ensure adjunct professors are able to collect unemployment benefits during the pandemic-caused shutdown has been advanced by a senate committee.
- ▶ In an effort to support our small business community, Deputy Speaker Burzichelli co-sponsored [legislation](#) that would allow municipalities to shut down certain roads in business districts to motor vehicle traffic, so that pedestrians may safely (and at a social distance) shop and enjoy the offerings of restaurants and other retailers.