

ASSEMBLY AGING AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 3908

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 24, 2024

The Assembly Aging and Human Services Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 3908.

This bill increases the monthly personal needs allowance (PNA), from the current rate of \$50, pursuant to the FY 2024 Appropriations Act, to \$140 for residents of nursing homes, State and county psychiatric hospitals, and State developmental centers.

This allowance is intended for residents to spend at their discretion on items such as telephone expenses, a meal out with friends, cards to send to family, reading materials, or hobbies. The PNA provides residents the opportunity to participate in activities beyond those provided by the facility, to remain connected with family and friends, and to obtain basic items such as clothing and shoes.

The bill also stipulates that beginning January 1 of the following year after the bill's enactment, the PNA is to be increased annually by the same percentage as the cost-of-living adjustment for Social Security benefits for that year.

In the case of residents eligible to receive SSI public assistance, a federal income supplement program designed to help aged, blind, and disabled people with little to no income, the federal government provides up to \$30 a month for small comfort items not provided by the facility. The State currently supplements the federal allowance by \$20 to ensure that SSI recipients residing in nursing facilities, State and county psychiatric hospitals, and State developmental centers receive a total PNA per month equal to that of Medicaid recipients, or \$50. Under the bill, absent any changes in the federal allowance, the State would be responsible for a \$90 per month supplemental payment for each SSI recipient.