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**GOVERNOR'S PRESS RELEASE ON SIGNING:** Yes

**FOLLOWING WERE PRINTED:**

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**REPORTS:** No

**HEARINGS:** No

**NEWSPAPER ARTICLES:** Yes

"Law curbs fees to uninsured," Herald News, 8-9-08, p.A8

"Hospital 'sticker price' billing is history, The Record, 8-9-08, p.L08.

"Corzine signs bills to improve hospitals," Asbury Park Press, 8-9-08, p.A3

"N.J. enacts bills on hospital accountability, The Philadelphia Inquirer, 8-9-08. p.B2

"Early warning system for ailing hospitals become law," The Star Ledger, 8-9-08, p.7.

"Gov. inks Ramos' hospital reform," The Jersey Journal, 8-9-08, p.A6.

LAW

§§1,2 -  
C.26:2H-12.50 &  
26:2H-12.51  
§3 - C.30:4-3.22  
§4 - Note to  
§§1-3

P.L. 2008, CHAPTER 59, *approved August 8, 2008*  
Assembly, No. 2607 (*First Reprint*)

1 AN ACT concerning general hospitals <sup>1</sup>and State psychiatric  
2 hospitals<sup>1</sup> and supplementing P.L.1971, c.136 (C.26:2H-1 et seq.)  
3 and Title 30 of the Revised Statutes<sup>1</sup>.  
4

5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
6 of New Jersey:  
7

8 1. A general hospital licensed pursuant to P.L.1971, c.136  
9 (C.26:2H-1 et seq.) shall, at least annually, conduct a public  
10 meeting to discuss issues relating to the operation of the hospital  
11 and concerns of the community with respect to the delivery of  
12 services at the hospital.

13 The hospital shall ensure that:

14 a. at a minimum, the chief executive officer of the hospital, the  
15 chairman of the hospital board of trustees, and at least 25% of the  
16 members of the hospital board of trustees are present at the meeting  
17 and available to respond to questions from members of the public;

18 b. the meeting is open to members of the public and organized  
19 so as to provide the community served by the hospital with  
20 information about the operation of the hospital, and to provide an  
21 opportunity for members of the public to ask questions and raise  
22 issues of concern to them; and

23 c. public notice of the meeting is provided:

24 (1) at least 14 days prior to the date of the meeting by posting  
25 written notice in the hospital in a conspicuous location that is  
26 available to the public, and by publishing the notice in a daily or  
27 weekly newspaper of general circulation in the service area of the  
28 hospital; and

29 (2) at least 30 days prior to the date of the meeting by posting  
30 notice on the hospital's Internet website.

31 d. notice of the meeting is provided to the Department of  
32 Health and Senior Services at least 30 days prior to the date of the  
33 meeting.

**EXPLANATION** – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

<sup>1</sup>Assembly floor amendments adopted May 19, 2008.

1       2. The Department of Health and Senior Services shall post the  
2 notice of a hospital's annual public meeting on the department's  
3 website.

4  
5       '3. Each State psychiatric hospital shall, at least annually,  
6 conduct a public meeting to discuss issues relating to the operation  
7 of the hospital and concerns of the community with respect to the  
8 delivery of services at the hospital.

9       a. The hospital shall ensure that:

10       (1) the meeting is conducted in accordance with the provisions  
11 of the "Senator Byron M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act,"  
12 P.L.1975, c.231 (C.10:4-6 et seq.);

13       (2) at a minimum, the chief executive officer of the hospital or  
14 his designee, the chairman of the hospital board of trustees, the  
15 Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Mental Health Services  
16 in the Department of Human Services or his designee, and at least  
17 25% of the members of the hospital board of trustees are present at  
18 the meeting and available to respond to questions from members of  
19 the public;

20       (3) the meeting is open to members of the public and organized  
21 so as to provide the community served by the hospital with  
22 information about the operation of the hospital, and to provide an  
23 opportunity for members of the public to ask questions and raise  
24 issues of concern to them; and

25       (4) public notice of the meeting is provided in accordance with  
26 the provisions of this subsection, which shall be deemed to comply  
27 with the notice requirements of P.L.1975, c.231, at least 14 days  
28 prior to the date of the meeting by posting written notice in the  
29 hospital in a conspicuous location that is available to the public, and  
30 by publishing the notice in a daily or weekly newspaper of general  
31 circulation in the service area of the hospital.

32       b. The Department of Human Services shall post the notice of  
33 the hospital's annual public meeting on the department website at  
34 least 30 days prior to the date of the meeting.'  
35

36       '[3.] 4.' This act shall take effect on the 60th day following the  
37 date of enactment.

38

39

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42       Requires each general hospital and State psychiatric hospital to  
43 annually conduct public meeting for community it serves.

# ASSEMBLY, No. 2607

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 213th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 5, 2008

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman JERRY GREEN**

**District 22 (Middlesex, Somerset and Union)**

**Assemblyman HERB CONAWAY, JR.**

**District 7 (Burlington and Camden)**

**Assemblyman ALBERT COUTINHO**

**District 29 (Essex and Union)**

**Assemblywoman L. GRACE SPENCER**

**District 29 (Essex and Union)**

**Assemblyman ANTHONY CHIAPPONE**

**District 31 (Hudson)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

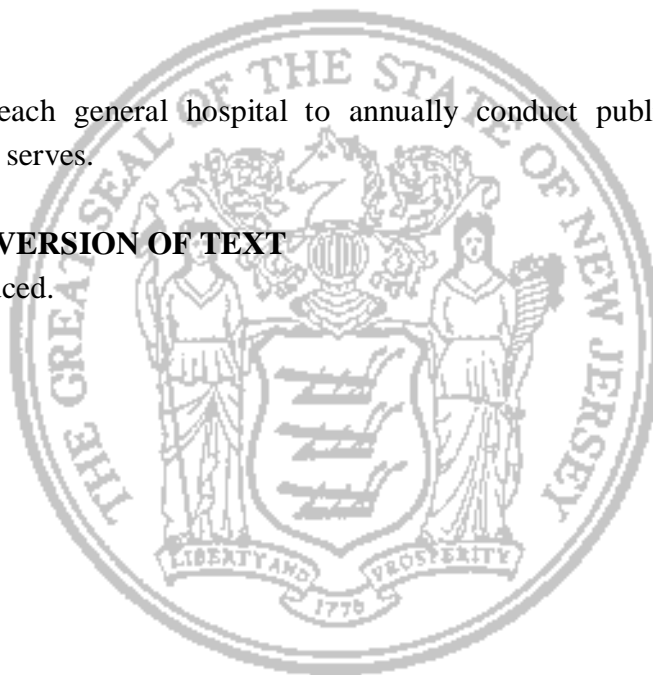
**Assemblywomen Greenstein and Oliver**

**SYNOPSIS**

Requires each general hospital to annually conduct public meeting for community it serves.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/20/2008)

1 AN ACT concerning general hospitals and supplementing P.L.1971,  
2 c.136 (C.26:2H-1 et seq.).

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
5 of New Jersey:

6

7 1. A general hospital licensed pursuant to P.L.1971, c.136  
8 (C.26:2H-1 et seq.) shall, at least annually, conduct a public  
9 meeting to discuss issues relating to the operation of the hospital  
10 and concerns of the community with respect to the delivery of  
11 services at the hospital.

12 The hospital shall ensure that:

13 a. at a minimum, the chief executive officer of the hospital, the  
14 chairman of the hospital board of trustees, and at least 25% of the  
15 members of the hospital board of trustees are present at the meeting  
16 and available to respond to questions from members of the public;

17 b. the meeting is open to members of the public and organized  
18 so as to provide the community served by the hospital with  
19 information about the operation of the hospital, and to provide an  
20 opportunity for members of the public to ask questions and raise  
21 issues of concern to them; and

22 c. public notice of the meeting is provided:

23 (1) at least 14 days prior to the date of the meeting by posting  
24 written notice in the hospital in a conspicuous location that is  
25 available to the public, and by publishing the notice in a daily or  
26 weekly newspaper of general circulation in the service area of the  
27 hospital; and

28 (2) at least 30 days prior to the date of the meeting by posting  
29 notice on the hospital's Internet website.

30 d. notice of the meeting is provided to the Department of  
31 Health and Senior Services at least 30 days prior to the date of the  
32 meeting.

33

34 2. The Department of Health and Senior Services shall post the  
35 notice of a hospital's annual public meeting on the department's  
36 website.

37

38 3. This act shall take effect on the 60th day following the date  
39 of enactment.

40

41

42

#### STATEMENT

43

44 The purpose of this bill is to ensure that members of the  
45 community served by a general hospital in this State have an  
46 opportunity each year to discuss issues relating to the operation of  
47 the hospital and concerns of the community with the hospital's  
48 administrators and board of trustees.

1       Specifically, the bill provides that a general hospital shall, at  
2 least annually, conduct a public meeting to discuss issues relating to  
3 the operation of the hospital and concerns of the community with  
4 respect to the delivery of services at the hospital. The hospital shall  
5 ensure that:

- 6       • at a minimum, the chief executive officer of the hospital, the  
7 chairman of the hospital board of trustees, and at least 25% of the  
8 members of the hospital board of trustees are present at the  
9 meeting and available to respond to questions from members of  
10 the public;
- 11       • the meeting is open to members of the public and organized so as  
12 to provide the community served by the hospital with information  
13 about the operation of the hospital, and to provide an opportunity  
14 for members of the public to ask questions and raise issues of  
15 concern to them;
- 16       • public notice of the meeting is provided: at least 14 days prior to  
17 the date of the meeting by posting written notice in the hospital in  
18 a conspicuous location that is available to the public, and by  
19 publishing the notice in a daily or weekly newspaper of general  
20 circulation in the service area of the hospital; and at least 30 days  
21 prior to the date of the meeting by posting notice on the hospital's  
22 Internet website; and
- 23       • notice of the meeting is provided to the Department of Health and  
24 Senior Services (DHSS) at least 30 days prior to the date of the  
25 meeting.

26       The bill also requires DHSS to post the notice of a hospital's  
27 annual public meeting on the DHSS website.

# ASSEMBLY HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

### ASSEMBLY, No. 2607

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 5, 2008

The Assembly Health and Senior Services Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 2607.

This bill is intended to provide members of the community served by each general hospital in this State with periodic opportunities to discuss issues relating to hospital operations and community concerns with the administrators and board of trustees of that facility.

The bill provides specifically as follows:

- A general hospital must, at least annually, conduct a public meeting to discuss issues relating to the operation of the hospital and concerns of the community with respect to the delivery of services at the hospital.
- The hospital is to ensure that:
  - at a minimum, the chief executive officer of the hospital, the chairman of the hospital board of trustees, and at least 25% of the members of the hospital board of trustees are present at the meeting and available to respond to questions from members of the public;
  - the meeting is open to members of the public and organized so as to provide the community served by the hospital with information about the operation of the hospital, and to provide an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions and raise issues of concern to them;
  - public notice of the meeting is provided: at least 14 days prior to the date of the meeting by posting written notice in the hospital in a conspicuous location that is available to the public, and by publishing the notice in a daily or weekly newspaper of general circulation in the service area of the hospital; and at least 30 days prior to the date of the meeting by posting notice on the Internet website of that hospital; and
  - the hospital provides notice of the meeting to the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) at least 30 days prior to the date of the meeting.
- DHSS is to post the notice of each such annual public meeting on its website.
- The bill takes effect on the 60th day following enactment.



STATEMENT TO  
**ASSEMBLY, No. 2607**

with Assembly Floor Amendments  
(Proposed By Assemblyman GREEN)

ADOPTED: MAY 19, 2008

These amendments expand the provisions of this bill to require that each State psychiatric hospital conduct an annual public meeting to discuss issues relating to the operation of the hospital and concerns of the community with respect to the delivery of services at the hospital in the same manner as a general hospital is already required to do under the provisions of this bill.

# SENATE, No. 1794

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 213th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 5, 2008

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator DANA L. REDD**  
**District 5 (Camden and Gloucester)**  
**Senator DIANE B. ALLEN**  
**District 7 (Burlington and Camden)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Senator Vitale**

**SYNOPSIS**

Requires each general hospital to annually conduct public meeting for community it serves.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/9/2008)**

1 AN ACT concerning general hospitals and supplementing P.L.1971,  
2 c.136 (C.26:2H-1 et seq.).

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
5 of New Jersey:

6

7 1. A general hospital licensed pursuant to P.L.1971, c.136  
8 (C.26:2H-1 et seq.) shall, at least annually, conduct a public  
9 meeting to discuss issues relating to the operation of the hospital  
10 and concerns of the community with respect to the delivery of  
11 services at the hospital.

12 The hospital shall ensure that:

13 a. at a minimum, the chief executive officer of the hospital, the  
14 chairman of the hospital board of trustees, and at least 25% of the  
15 members of the hospital board of trustees are present at the meeting  
16 and available to respond to questions from members of the public;

17 b. the meeting is open to members of the public and organized  
18 so as to provide the community served by the hospital with  
19 information about the operation of the hospital, and to provide an  
20 opportunity for members of the public to ask questions and raise  
21 issues of concern to them; and

22 c. public notice of the meeting is provided:

23 (1) at least 14 days prior to the date of the meeting by posting  
24 written notice in the hospital in a conspicuous location that is  
25 available to the public, and by publishing the notice in a daily or  
26 weekly newspaper of general circulation in the service area of the  
27 hospital; and

28 (2) at least 30 days prior to the date of the meeting by posting  
29 notice on the hospital's Internet website.

30 d. notice of the meeting is provided to the Department of Health  
31 and Senior Services at least 30 days prior to the date of the meeting.

32

33 2. The Department of Health and Senior Services shall post the  
34 notice of a hospital's annual public meeting on the department's  
35 website.

36

37 3. This act shall take effect on the 60th day following the date of  
38 enactment.

39

40

41

#### STATEMENT

42

43 The purpose of this bill is to ensure that members of the  
44 community served by a general hospital in this State have an  
45 opportunity each year to discuss issues relating to the operation of  
46 the hospital and concerns of the community with the hospital's  
47 administrators and board of trustees.

1 Specifically, the bill provides that a general hospital shall, at  
2 least annually, conduct a public meeting to discuss issues relating to  
3 the operation of the hospital and concerns of the community with  
4 respect to the delivery of services at the hospital. The hospital shall  
5 ensure that:

- 6 • at a minimum, the chief executive officer of the hospital, the  
7 chairman of the hospital board of trustees, and at least 25% of the  
8 members of the hospital board of trustees are present at the  
9 meeting and available to respond to questions from members of  
10 the public;
- 11 • the meeting is open to members of the public and organized so as  
12 to provide the community served by the hospital with information  
13 about the operation of the hospital, and to provide an opportunity  
14 for members of the public to ask questions and raise issues of  
15 concern to them;
- 16 • public notice of the meeting is provided: at least 14 days prior to  
17 the date of the meeting by posting written notice in the hospital in  
18 a conspicuous location that is available to the public, and by  
19 publishing the notice in a daily or weekly newspaper of general  
20 circulation in the service area of the hospital; and at least 30 days  
21 prior to the date of the meeting by posting notice on the hospital's  
22 Internet website; and
- 23 • notice of the meeting is provided to the Department of Health and  
24 Senior Services (DHSS) at least 30 days prior to the date of the  
25 meeting.

26 The bill also requires DHSS to post the notice of a hospital's  
27 annual public meeting on the DHSS website.

SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR  
CITIZENS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

**SENATE, No. 1794**

with committee amendments

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: MAY 15, 2008

The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 1794.

As amended by committee, the purpose of this bill is to ensure that members of the community served by a general hospital in this State or a State psychiatric hospital have an opportunity each year to discuss issues relating to the operation of the hospital and concerns of the community with the hospital's administrators and board of trustees.

Specifically, the bill provides that a hospital shall, at least annually, conduct a public meeting to discuss issues relating to the operation of the hospital and concerns of the community with respect to the delivery of services at the hospital.

A general hospital shall ensure that:

(1) at a minimum, the chief executive officer of the hospital, the chairman of the hospital board of trustees, and at least 25% of the members of the hospital board of trustees are present at the meeting and available to respond to questions from members of the public;

(2) the meeting is open to members of the public and organized so as to provide the community served by the hospital with information about the operation of the hospital, and to provide an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions and raise issues of concern to them;

(3) public notice of the meeting is provided: at least 14 days prior to the date of the meeting by posting written notice in the hospital in a conspicuous location that is available to the public, and by publishing the notice in a daily or weekly newspaper of general circulation in the service area of the hospital; and at least 30 days prior to the date of the meeting by posting notice on the hospital's Internet website; and

(4) notice of the meeting is provided to the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) at least 30 days prior to the date of the meeting.

A State psychiatric hospital shall ensure that:

(1) the meeting is conducted in accordance with the provisions of the "Senator Byron M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act," P.L.1975, c.231 (C.10:4-6 et seq.);

(2) at a minimum, the chief executive officer of the hospital or his designee, the chairman of the hospital board of trustees, the Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Mental Health Services in the Department of Human Services or his designee, and at least 25% of the members of the hospital board of trustees are present at the meeting and available to respond to questions from members of the public;

(3) the meeting is open to members of the public and organized so as to provide the community served by the hospital with information about the operation of the hospital, and to provide an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions and raise issues of concern to them; and

(4) public notice of the meeting is provided in accordance with the provisions of the bill, which shall be deemed to comply with the notice requirements of P.L.1975, c.231, at least 14 days prior to the date of the meeting by posting written notice in the hospital in a conspicuous location that is available to the public, and by publishing the notice in a daily or weekly newspaper of general circulation in the service area of the hospital.

The bill also requires the Department of Health and Senior Services, in the case of general hospitals, and the Department of Human Services, in the case of psychiatric hospitals, to post the notice of a hospital's annual public meeting on the respective department's website.

The committee amended the bill to expand the public meeting requirement to include State psychiatric hospitals.

This bill is similar to Assembly Bill No. 2607 (Green/Conaway/Coutinho/Spencer/Chiappone), which is pending before the General Assembly.



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Date: August 8, 2008

**For More Information:**

Sean Darcy

Jim Gardner

**Phone: 609-777-2600**

## Governor Corzine Signs Hospital Reform Legislation

**Hamilton** – Governor Jon S. Corzine today signed a package of four bills that will improve access to health care, protect the uninsured and strengthen the accountability and transparency of the health care delivery system in the Garden State. The legislation was signed at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton.

“The series of hospital reform bills I am signing reflects a re-prioritization of New Jersey’s health care system,” said Governor Corzine. “These measures, combined with the stabilization fund we formally enacted in June, ensure that there is increased transparency, better financial management and long-term planning in place for all New Jersey hospitals.”

The legislation addresses several key recommendations made by the Commission on Rationalizing Health Care Resources, a panel appointed by the governor to review the state's hospitals and other health care services.

"With the signing of this bill package, New Jersey takes an important step forward in improving access to health care, protecting the uninsured and strengthening the fiscal monitoring and transparency of hospital operations," said Health and Senior Services Commissioner Heather Howard. "These key legislative reforms will strengthen New Jersey's health care system."

A2609/ S1797 will ensure that working poor families without health insurance are not overcharged for needed hospital care. Because the uninsured often pay the highest prices for services, this bill eliminates that unfair practice by requiring hospitals to charge no more than 15 percent above the Medicare rate. Uninsured families qualify for this rate if their income is less than 500 percent of the federal poverty level.

"When avoidable financial hardships force hospitals to shut their doors, New Jerseyans in need are forced to travel longer distances to receive immediate medical care," said Assemblyman Herb Conaway, Jr. (D-Burlington). "We cannot allow fiscal issues to cause another hospital to close its doors and further jeopardize the quality and availability of health care in New Jersey."

Primary sponsors of the bill were Assemblymen Herb Conaway, Jr., (D-Burlington) and Paul D. Moriarity (Camden, Gloucester). In the Senate, primary sponsors were Senators Loretta Weinberg (D-Bergen) and Bill Baroni (R-Mercer, Middlesex).

Another bill, S1796/A2608 creates an Early Warning System that will provide the Department of Health and Senior Services with the authority and the information needed to adequately monitor hospital finances, identify distressed hospitals early, and institute a system of progressive monitoring.

"New Jersey has faced an epidemic of hospital closures in recent years," said Senator Bob Gordon (D-Bergen), the prime sponsor of S-1796. "Through this legislation, the Department of Health will have an early warning when a hospital becomes fiscally unstable, and will be able to take the appropriate action to ensure that the health care needs of the community are met. Hopefully, we will be able to intervene before fiscal instability gives way to fiscal insolvency, and yet another health care facility in the Garden State has to close its doors forever."

"Closer scrutiny of how health care dollars are spent at hospitals in dire financial straits can help turn around poor



management and prevent a hospital from shutting its doors for good," said Assemblyman Ralph R. Caputo (D-Essex).

"Audits and monitoring by state officials will bring accountability and transparency to New Jersey's healthcare industry," said Assembly Majority Leader Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-Mercer). "The state has a responsibility to step in and hold hospitals accountable for how health care dollars are spent and managed."

Primary sponsors of the legislation were Senators Robert M. Gordon (D-Bergen) and Thomas H. Kean, Jr., (R-Essex, Morris, Somerset, Union). In the Assembly, primary sponsors included Assemblymen Herb Conaway, Jr. (D-Burlington), Ralph R. Caputo (D-Essex), Gary S. Schaer (D-Bergen, Essex, Passaic), Albert Coutinho (D-Essex, Union) Anthony Chiappone (D-Hudson), Assemblywoman Grace L. Spencer (D-Essex, Union) and Assembly Majority Leader Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-Mercer).

Through A2607 / S1794, each general hospital and State psychiatric hospital is required to annually conduct a public meeting for the community it serves. The goal is to improve communication between a hospital and the community it serves.

"Our local hospitals serve as safe havens for the residents who live nearby, and they play a vital role in the communities they serve," said Senator Dana Redd (D-Camden, Gloucester), who is a prime sponsor of S-1794.

"Hospitals can only continue to provide this necessary care if they are in tune with the needs of residents, so it is imperative that the lines of communication are open between hospital administration and the public."

It is imperative that New Jersey communities are part of the decision-making process regarding the delivery of health care services to ensure that hospitals are providing quality care to the communities that rely on its services the most," said Assemblyman Jerry Green (D-Union).

Primary sponsors of the bill were Assemblymen Jerry Green (D-Middlesx, Somerset, Union), Herb Conaway, Jr. (D-Burlington), Albert Coutinho (D-Essex, Union), Anthony Chiappone (D-Hudson) and Assemblywoman Grace L. Spencer (D-Essex, Union). In the Senate, primary sponsors were Senators Dana L. Redd (D-Camden) and Diane B. Allen (R-Burlington, Camden).

Finally, S1795/A2606 requires that all general hospital trustees complete comprehensive training to ensure effective financial oversight and to hold hospital management accountable. As a result, New Jersey is now the first

State to require hospital trustee training for all board members.

"This law was based on recommendations from the Commission on Rationalizing Health Care Resources, which was established to examine regulatory, financing and market mechanisms that affect the long-term stability of the State's health care delivery system," said Senator Jim Whelan (D-Atlantic). "It is vital that all hospital board members are aware of every aspect of their facilities, and in order to do so, they must complete this training program which will help clarify the roles and duties of a hospital trustee."

"Hospital trustee members should be properly trained to fulfill their duties," said Senator Ronald L. Rice (D-Essex). "Trustees must ensure that hospitals are operating efficiently and are financially responsible. Sufficient education and training are vital to ensuring that hospitals are staffed with the most qualified individuals in order to prevent mismanagement of resources."

"Hospital trustees must be trained in their role and responsibilities to ensure that a hospital is operating efficiently and managing its finances responsibly," said Assemblywoman Connie Wagner (D-Bergen). "Appropriate education and training are key to ensuring that hospital boards are staffed with the most capable and knowledgeable individuals to prevent mismanagement of precious hospital resources."

Primary sponsors of the legislation were Senators Jim Whelan (D-Atlantic) and Ronald L. Rice (D-Essex). In the Assembly, primary sponsors were Assemblywomen Connie Wagner (D-Bergen) and Linda R. Greenstein (Mercer, Middlesex) and Assemblymen Herb Conaway, Jr. (D-Burlington), Anthony Chiappone (D-Hudson) and Ruben J. Ramos, Jr. (D-Hudson).

Governor Corzine recently signed legislation establishing the Health Care Stabilization Fund with an appropriation of \$44 million to address the financial stability of the state's hospitals. The Health Care Stabilization Fund will provide critical support and a mechanism for working with hospitals and other financially distressed facilities that face closure or significant service reductions.

###

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