

June-21-06 Corzine Signs Independence, Dignity and Choice in Long Term Care Legislation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Anthony Coley

Brendan Gilfillan

PHONE: 609-777-2600

GOVERNOR CORZINE SIGNS INDEPENDENCE, DIGNITY AND CHOICE IN LONG TERM CARE LEGISLATION

TRENTON - Governor Jon S. Corzine today signed the "Independence, Dignity and Choice in Long Term Care Act," which will adjust New Jersey's long-term care funding structure to provide more options to New Jersey seniors.

"This legislation represents a real shift in how New Jersey cares for our seniors and will give them a number of long-term care choices," said Governor Corzine. "The days of limiting options to only nursing home care - or even no care - will be a thing of the past and the options of home and community-based care will become a reality in our state."

Currently, a majority of seniors seeking long-term care find themselves in nursing homes. Often, this is not a necessary or even appropriate form of care. While other options such as home care and community-based care do exist, the state's public funding system is not set up to fund them.

The legislation signed today will begin a process to reallocate Medicaid long-term care expenditures to create a more appropriate funding balance between nursing home care and other home and community-based care options. Additionally, the legislation will implement mechanisms to streamline Medicaid eligibility determinations as well as a computer tracking system for Medicaid long-term care expenditures.

This legislation builds upon Governor Codey's Executive Order 31 aimed at rebalancing long-term care and fast tracking eligibility. The bill sets out to

expand statewide the executive order's two pilot programs, one of which is up and running in Warren County and the second program which is scheduled to begin in Atlantic County by July 1.

The legislation (A-2823/S-1642) was sponsored in the Assembly by Jim Whelan, Louis D. Greenwald, Nelson T. Albano, Jeff Van Drew, and Gordon M. Johnson and in the Senate by Loretta Weinberg and Nicholas Asselta.