Legislative Update – January 2019

Department of Health Awarded $2.3 Million to Enhance Pediatric Mental Health Care through Telehealth—On January 10, 2019, the New Jersey Department of Health (DOH) was awarded more than $2.3 million over a five-year period from the federal Health Resources and Service Administration to enhance primary, behavioral and mental health care for children and adolescents through telemedicine and educational programs. The grant will provide technical assistance to primary care providers on screening, early identification, diagnosis, referral, and treatment of children and adolescents with mental and behavioral health disorders using telehealth. Telehealth is the provision of health care remotely by means of telecommunications technology, such as video conferencing and internet technology. The grant will specifically assist the Pediatric Psychiatry Collaborative, a network of nine regional hospital-based hubs funded by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families that screen, identify, and care for children with mental health concerns, and offer telehealth services. New Jersey First Lady Tammy Murphy, who has been active in the Murphy administration's health care efforts, stated that "[E]xpanding integrated treatment options with telehealth will alleviate some of the logistical challenges associated with receiving care and encourage those who are not receiving treatment to seek help."

New Bill Introduced to Prohibit Pre-Approval of Cancer Treatments—On December 6, 2018, Bill S3251 was introduced in the New Jersey Senate to prohibit pre-approval or precertification of cancer treatments, tests, procedures, and prescription drugs covered under health benefits or prescription drug benefits plans. The Bill had previously been introduced in the New Jersey Assembly. The Bill prohibits health insurers, third-party administrators, pharmacy benefits managers, and the State Health Benefits Program and the School Employees' Health Benefits Program from requiring the pre-approval or precertification of treatments, tests, procedures, or prescription drugs covered under a health benefits or prescription drug benefits plan when prescribed for a covered individual who has been diagnosed with cancer. The purpose of the Bill is to ensure that cancer patients are not burdened with technical requirements by health benefits providers which employ utilization management review systems that slow down medical care.

Legislature Passes Bill To Establish Reciprocity Requirements for Out-of-State Certified Nurse Aides—On December 17, 2018, the New Jersey Senate and the New Jersey Assembly passed Bill A2442 which establishes reciprocity requirements for out-of-state certified nurse aides to practice in New Jersey. The Bill now awaits Governor Murphy's signature. Under the Bill, an individual certified as a nurse aide by another state or territory of the United States may apply to have that certification entered on the registry established and maintained by the Department of Health, provided that: (1) the Department of Health receives documentation from the other state or territory that the applicant holds a current, valid certification as a nurse aide in the state or territory; (2) the applicant has not been convicted of any crimes and has no documented findings of abuse, neglect, or misappropriation of resident property in the other state or territory; (3) the applicant complies with applicable criminal history record background check requirements; and (4) the applicant has completed within the preceding 24 months the amount of continuing education hours required by regulation for a nurse aide; or the applicant has the equivalent of at least two years of full-time employment in the other state or territory as a nurse aide and the most recent date of such employment is within the 24-month period immediately preceding the date of the application.

New Bill Introduced Requiring Medical Marijuana Reporting to Prescription Monitoring Database—On December 17, 2018, Bill A4824 was introduced in the New Jersey Assembly requiring written instructions for, and dispensations of, medical marijuana to be reported to the New Jersey prescription monitoring database. The Bill specifically requires medical marijuana alternative treatment centers to submit certain information concerning medical marijuana dispensed to registered qualifying patients or their designated caregivers to the prescription monitoring program administered by the Division of Consumer Affairs in the Department of Law and Public Safety. The information will include the form, strain, quantity, and potency of medical marijuana dispensed, the patient's name and registry identification number, the primary caregiver's name and registry identification number if the medical marijuana is dispensed to the caregiver, and the name of the physician and the alternative

treatment center. Additionally, the Bill requires alternative treatment centers to check a patient's prescription monitoring information prior to dispensing medical marijuana to the patient or the patient's primary caregiver to determine whether the patient was dispensed medical marijuana from any alternative treatment center within the past 30 days.