

December 8, 2023

The Honorable Phil Murphy
Governor, the State of New Jersey
Office of the Governor
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625

Re: Support S3495/A4049 Providing Presumptive Eligibility for Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services

Dear Governor Murphy:

On behalf of AARP New Jersey and the undersigned organizations representing over 2 million New Jerseyans, we are requesting your public support for [S3495](#) that would provide presumptive eligibility for home and community-based services (HCBS) under Medicaid/NJ FamilyCare. Presumptive eligibility for HCBS is a much-needed change in our system of long-term care that better supports older residents' desire to age in their homes and communities, avoid nursing home stays and expand choices for consumers and their families. The companion legislation, A4049, passed the Assembly unanimously on June 30, 2023. In the Senate, S3495 has passed the Senate Health and Budget Committees with near unanimous bi-partisan support. We are working to move the bill to a final Senate floor vote and on to your desk for enactment. New Jerseyans need your support to enact S3495 to help keep older New Jerseyans in their homes, instead of unnecessarily forcing them into nursing home care.

New Jersey's long term care system is broken. The Department of Justice's recent report concerning NJ's Veterans Homes and the abrupt closing of the publicly funded Princeton Care Center are just the latest examples of how critical it is to transform our system of long-term care. As identified in the [June 2020 Manatt Report's Recommendations to Strengthen the Resilience of New Jersey's Nursing Homes in the wake of COVID-19](#), NJ needs to build a more resilient and higher quality long term care system. Bold and transformative action is required to improve the safety and dignity in our care of aging adults. **Enacting S3495/A4049 is a transformative step that will help keep older residents in their homes with the services they need – and out of more costly, state-funded nursing homes. Enacting S3495/A4049 will also reduce system costs for NJ and all taxpayers.**

New Jersey's seniors deserve quality, affordable choices for care at home – where they want to be. But too many New Jersey seniors can't afford this care. When health issues arise, and they need help the most, Medicaid approval takes far too long, and seniors are kept waiting for services to start. While they wait, seniors who are likely to qualify for Medicaid, are often forced into nursing homes, which generally cost two times more than HCBS.

Similar to the state's current use of presumptive eligibility for other populations, under presumptive eligibility, NJ Familycare would use basic financial information and screening tools to expeditiously presume an individual eligible for Medicaid and commence services when a need arises, rather than waiting months. The non-partisan NJ Office of Legislative Services (OLS) estimates that S3495/A4049 will result in annual net Medicaid state cost savings of \$24 million to \$99.5 million, by reducing the number of residents in nursing homes.

We urge you to publicly support S3495 and urge the NJ Senate to send the bill to your desk. New Jersey seniors cannot afford to wait. We appreciate your consideration of this request. For questions or additional

information, please contact Crystal McDonald, Associate State Director-Advocacy, at cmcdonald@arp.org or (609) 204-3552.

Sincerely,

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