

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

September 10, 2014

ASSEMBLY BILL NO. 2795

ADVANCE COPY

To the General Assembly:

Pursuant to Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14 of the New Jersey Constitution, I am returning Assembly Bill No. 2795 without my approval.

This bill would provide Medicaid coverage for family planning services to non-pregnant individuals with incomes up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level. To implement this bill, the Department of Human Services would be required to establish a new Medicaid program devoted solely to administering coverage for family planning services, separate and beyond the current Medicaid program.

Once again, the sponsors of this bill have attempted to circumvent the annual appropriations process and authorize new State spending beyond that provided for in the recently enacted, bi-partisan Fiscal Year 2015 Appropriations Act passed by the Legislature and approved by me. Therefore, as I have done several times in the past, I am again returning this bill without my approval.

By pursuing the costly expansion of Medicaid services outside of the annual appropriations process, the sponsors have irresponsibly sought to encumber State revenues without identifying any corresponding reductions in the State's budget. This year, as in the past, many difficult decisions were made in negotiating with the Legislature to reach an agreement that meets New Jersey's constitutional obligation to balance its budget. Indeed, those negotiations resulted in the approval of significant funds to provide healthcare and other services to some of our State's most needy and vulnerable citizens. For instance, the recently enacted State budget includes funding for mammograms, pap smears, colorectal screenings, and prostate

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exams through the New Jersey Cancer Education and Early Detection program, as well as continued support for the State's twenty Federally Qualified Health Centers that operate at more than 100 locations and help to meet the healthcare needs of thousands of low-income families. Additionally, the budget also includes more than \$85 million for the Early Childhood Intervention Program to address the needs of young children with developmental disabilities.

Accordingly, because this bill will upset the balance of the recently enacted State budget, constrain our ability to fund other fiscal obligations, and potentially expose the State's taxpayers to additional burdens, I herewith return Assembly Bill No. 2795 without my approval.

Respectfully,

[seal]

/s/ Chris Christie

Governor

Attest:

/s/ Christopher S. Porrino

Chief Counsel to the Governor