

ACT 233

S.B. NO. 968

A Bill for an Act Relating to Public Assistance.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. Section 346-53, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

“§346-53 Determination of amount of assistance. (a) The standard of need for families of given sizes shall equal the poverty level established by the federal government, pro-rated over a twelve-month period.

(b) The assistance allowance provided shall be based on a percentage of the standard of need. On July 1, 1988, the assistance allowance shall be set at sixty per cent of the standard of need. Changes in the financial assistance standard of need and the assistance allowance shall become effective on July 1 of each year thereafter, subsequent to any change in the federal poverty level.

(c) The director, pursuant to chapter 91, shall determine the rate of payment for the different levels of domiciliary care provided to recipients eligible either for Federal Supplemental Security Income or public assistance in accordance with state standards or both. The director shall provide for level of care increases effective July 1, 1988, in amounts not less than \$60 for each level of care.

The rate of payment at which level a recipient enters an adult residential care home licensed pursuant to section 321-15.6 shall remain the same for as long as the recipient resides in that adult residential care home. The rate of payment may be raised if the recipient's condition so requires, or by rule of the department in accordance with this subsection; provided that:

- (1) Notwithstanding the rate of payment at the time of entry, the department shall ensure that the recipient shall receive the quality of care consistent with the level of care as determined by the department; and
- (2) If the operator does not provide the quality of care consistent with the needs of the individual as determined by and to the satisfaction of the department, the department may reduce the rate of payment, or adjust the level of care, or remove the recipient to another facility.

The department shall handle abusive practices under this section in accordance with chapter 91.

Nothing in this subsection shall allow the director to remove a recipient from an adult residential care home or other similar institution if the recipient does not desire to be removed and the operator thereof is agreeable to the recipient remaining therein, except where the recipient requires a higher level of care than provided thereby, or where the recipient no longer requires any domiciliary care.

(d) The department shall pay rental and utility (to include gas, electricity, and water only) deposits once only for any person eligible for financial assistance by the department. However, under extraordinary circumstances as determined by the department, an additional rental deposit, utility deposit, or both, may be granted.

(e) Any recipient may petition the department for additional assistance when the recipient's need is due to emergencies caused by seismic wave, tsunami, hurricane, volcanic eruption, typhoon, earthquake, flood, or fire determined by the director to have caused losses as to require and justify additional assistance from the State. In addition any recipient may petition the department for additional assistance for the replacement or repair of household appliances. Such additional assistance shall be paid on an emergency basis, as determined by the department, to meet the cost of replacing or repairing household appliances. If the cost of repairs of household appliances is less than one-half the unit cost of the item, the department shall pay for the cost of repairs. If the cost of repairs of household appliances is

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more than one-half the unit cost of the item, the department shall replace the household appliance; provided that the replacement cost shall not exceed \$350. For the purposes of this subsection "household appliances" means a refrigerator or a range.

The department shall establish an emergency fund, not to exceed one per cent of total financial assistance from state funds required by this chapter in the previous fiscal year. The director shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91 for determining in which cases to grant lump sum payments to recipients petitioning for additional assistance.

(f) The department shall include protective child care payment as a special needs item in the financial assistance standard for cases of child neglect or abuse requiring placement of a child in child care. The referral for protective child care payment shall be from the department's child welfare program and the rate of payment shall be set by the department.

[(f)] (g) The director shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91 to implement this section."

SECTION 2. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 1989.

(Approved June 8, 1989.)