

# Labor groups push for enforceable health care benchmarks

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A coalition of influential labor groups want to create a new board to set enforceable health care cost benchmarks in the state, according to a memo shared with POLITICO.

The proposal is from the New Jersey Coalition for Affordable Hospitals, which includes influential labor unions including the New Jersey Education Association, the Communications Workers of America, the Policemen's Benevolent Association and 32BJ SEIU.

"The legislation would ... ensure that an independent cost containment Board has the ability to set healthcare cost growth targets, examine information about the healthcare market's cost drivers, and take enforcement action if targets are not met," according to a synopsis that has been shared with lawmakers.

**Context:** The pitch to lawmakers is the most ambitious proposal to date set forth by the coalition. The group previously pushed for a bill that [would replicate federal hospital pricing transparency rules](#) on the state level, allowing state regulators to enforce the pricing requirement.

The new legislation proposed by the labor groups would include that duplication of hospital price transparency rules.

It would also set up a new government board to set the benchmarks, which would include "government officials, labor representatives, nonhealthcare industry employers, and community advocates." Health care industry representatives could advise the board but would not be able to have binding powers on it, according to the proposal. The group is also proposing allowing patients to sue hospitals if they are sent to debt collectors and the hospital is not compliant with federal price transparency rules.

Gov. Phil Murphy in late 2021 [signed an executive order](#) creating a health care benchmark program. Major health care industry players, including health care providers and insurers, signed onto a compact promising to help work towards Murphy's [benchmark goals](#).

According to Murphy's office at the time, the main [enforcement mechanism](#) of the benchmarks will be "transparent public reporting."

**What's next:** It is unclear which lawmakers, if any, would introduce such a bill.

Read the [synopsis here](#).