

New Jersey May Tell Pet Providers to Tout Pet Insurance

Measure would require customers to be notified about pet health insurance.

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Under a measure recently introduced in New Jersey's state Assembly, pet providers in New Jersey would be required to notify customers about pet health insurance.

Assembly Bill 3488 would require all licensed kennels, pet shops, shelters, pounds and anyone in the business of selling pets to provide written notice to customers regarding the availability of pet health insurance offered in New Jersey. The bill would require the notice be a separate document that a consumer may obtain at the "point-of-sale of the pet." The commissioner of health and senior services is charged with determining the information required on the written notice. The only specified requirement regarding the information to be included in the notice is contact information of insurers currently offering pet health insurance in the state.

Another bill introduced in the state would increase fines to pet stores that violated certain laws and regulations, such as licensing requirement. Current penalties range from \$5 to \$50; the proposed penalties would range from \$100 to \$1,000.

According to the bill, the purpose of the measure is to "enhance the power of the state and its municipalities to enforce certain laws regulating the treatment of animals."

New Jersey law defines a "pet shop" as "any place of business which is not part of a kennel, wherein animals, including, but not limited to, dogs, cats, birds, fish, reptiles, rabbits, hamsters or gerbils, are kept or displayed chiefly for the purpose of sale to individuals for personal appreciation and companionship rather than for business or research purposes."

Both bills have been assigned to the state Assembly Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources. No hearing date has been set for either.