

CHAPTER 37

AN ACT concerning automobile insurance urban enterprise zones and amending P.L.1970, c.215.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. Section 1 of P.L.1970, c.215 (C.17:29D-1) is amended to read as follows:

C.17:29D-1 Rules, regulations for insurance plans; administration; requirements for automobile plan.

1. The Commissioner of Banking and Insurance may adopt, issue and promulgate rules and regulations establishing a plan for the providing and apportionment of insurance coverage for applicants therefor who are in good faith entitled to, but are unable to procure the same, through ordinary methods. Every insurer admitted to transact and transacting any line, or lines, of insurance in the State of New Jersey shall participate in such plan and provide insurance coverage to the extent required in such rules and regulations.

The governing board of any plan established pursuant to the commissioner's rules and regulations shall continue to exercise such administrative authority, subject to the commissioner's oversight and as provided in any rules and regulations promulgated pursuant to this section, as is necessary to ensure the plan's efficient operation, including, but not limited to, the authority to investigate complaints and hear appeals from applicants, insureds, producers, servicing carriers or participants about any matter pertaining to the plan's proper administration, as well as the authority to appoint subcommittees to hear such appeals. Any determination of an appeal by a plan's governing board shall be subject to review by the commissioner on the record below, and shall not be considered a contested case under the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.). The commissioner's determination shall be a final order and shall be subject to review by the Superior Court.

Any plan established pursuant to this section to provide insurance for automobiles, as defined in section 2 of P.L.1972, c.70 (C.39:6A-2), shall provide:

a. For a rating system which shall produce rates for each coverage which are adequate for the safeness and soundness of the plan, and are not excessive nor unfairly discriminatory with regard to risks in the plan involving essentially the same hazards and expense elements, which rates may be changed from time to time by a filing with the commissioner in a manner and form approved by the commissioner;

b. For rates charged to plan insureds which shall be sufficient to meet the plan's expenses and the plan's losses on an incurred basis, including the establishment and maintenance of actuarially sound loss reserves to cover all future costs associated with the exposure;

c. For a limited assignment distribution system permitting insurers to enter into agreements with other mutually agreeable insurers or other qualified entities to transfer their applicants and insureds under such plan to such insurers or other entities, including applicants and insureds who may be covered by special automobile insurance policies issued pursuant to section 45 of P.L.2003, c.89 (C.39:6A-3.3);

d. That it shall not provide insurance coverage for more than 10 percent of the aggregate number of private passenger automobile non-fleet exposures being written in the total private passenger automobile insurance market in this State. The plan shall provide for the cessation of the acceptance of applications or the issuance of new policies to eligible persons at any time it reaches 10 percent of marketshare, as certified by the commissioner, until such time that the commissioner certifies that the plan is insuring less than 10 percent of the aggregate number of private passenger automobile non-fleet exposures being written in the total private passenger automobile insurance market in this State;

e. Except for risks written in automobile insurance urban enterprise zones pursuant to subsection i., or risks written pursuant to subsection j. of this section, that it shall not provide coverage to an eligible person as defined pursuant to section 25 of P.L.1990, c.8 (C.17:33B-13);

f. (Deleted by amendment, P.L.1997, c.151.)

g. That the plan shall not be subsidized by any source external to the plan;

h. That a qualified insurer who writes automobile insurance risks in those automobile insurance urban enterprise zones designated by the commissioner pursuant to section 20 of

P.L.1997, c.151 (C.17:33C-2) shall receive assigned risk credits for voluntary risks written in those designated automobile insurance urban enterprise zones as a direct writer or through a UEZ agent or agents or through any agent with whom the insurer has an in-force contract as of the effective date of P.L.1997, c.151 (C.17:33B-64 et al.). The commissioner shall establish by regulation the manner in which any qualified automobile insurer may utilize the provisions of this subsection. In no event shall that credit apply to reduce an insurer's obligations under subsection i. of this section;

i. (1) For a voluntary rating tier to accommodate eligible persons, as defined in section 25 of P.L.1990, c.8 (C.17:33B-13), residing in automobile insurance urban enterprise zones, designated by the commissioner pursuant to section 20 of P.L.1997, c.151 (C.17:33C-2), to provide increased availability and encourage the voluntary writing of eligible persons residing in those zones;

(2) The rates utilized in this voluntary rating tier shall be the voluntary market rates in use by the insurer to whom the risk is assigned in that territory;

(3) The voluntary rating tier shall not provide insurance coverage for more than five percent of the aggregate number of private passenger automobile non-fleet exposures being written in the total private passenger automobile insurance market in this State, and the number of exposures written in the voluntary rating tier shall be included for computing the maximum number of exposures permitted to be written in the plan;

(4) The plan shall distribute risks submitted by qualified producers to insurers authorized to write automobile insurance in this State pursuant to a fair and nondiscriminatory formula established by the commissioner. The formula shall provide that insurers which have, and maintain, an aggregate voluntary automobile insurance marketshare in automobile insurance urban enterprise zones, which is reasonably equal to the insurer's voluntary Statewide marketshare excluding risks written in automobile insurance urban enterprise zones, shall be exempt from these distributions;

(5) Qualified producers may submit eligible person risks from automobile insurance urban enterprise zones to the plan for coverage in the voluntary rating tier. As used in this subsection i.: a "qualified producer" means a UEZ agent, as defined in section 19 of P.L.1997, c.151 (C.17:33C-1), who has met any limit on exposures that may be written in accordance with the UEZ agent's agreement with the appointing insurer pursuant to section 22 of P.L.1997, c.151 (C.17:33C-4); and a producer who: is duly licensed with property/casualty authority for the three years immediately preceding the effective date of P.L.1997, c.151 (C.17:33B-64 et al.); has no affiliation with a voluntary market insurer for the placement of automobile insurance; had an affiliation with a voluntary market insurer for the placement of automobile insurance that was terminated by the insurer in the last three years; demonstrates to the plan his competency, efficiency and effectiveness in the solicitation, negotiation and effectuation of automobile insurance as evidenced by any history of disciplinary actions or complaints against the producer, and other relevant factors; conducts his business in an office in an automobile insurance urban enterprise zone; and meets such other requirements as may be established by the commissioner by regulation. For purposes of this subsection i., "insurer" means an insurer or group of affiliated insurers admitted or authorized to transact the business of automobile insurance in this State;

(6) This subsection shall expire on April 1, 2009;

j. For a voluntary rating tier to accommodate eligible persons, as defined in section 25 of P.L.1990, c.8 (C.17:33B-13), denied or refused renewal of automobile insurance in a rating territory by an insurer granted relief pursuant to subsection d. of section 27 of P.L.1990, c.8 (C.17:33B-15);

k. That an insurer granted relief pursuant to subsection d. of section 27 of P.L.1990, c.8 (C.17:33B-15) shall receive assigned risk credits for voluntary risks written in excess of the percentage growth standard established by that subsection d. The commissioner shall establish by regulation the manner in which such an insurer may utilize the provisions of this subsection. In no event shall that credit apply to reduce an insurer's obligations under subsection i. of this section; and

l. That an insurer granted relief pursuant to subsection d. of section 27 of P.L.1990, c.8 (C.17:33B-15) shall also receive assigned risk credits for the voluntary first renewal of an eligible person written pursuant to subsection j. of this section.

Prior to the adoption or amendment of such rules and regulations, the commissioner shall consult with such members of the insurance industry as he deems appropriate. Such consultation shall be in addition to any otherwise required public hearing or notice with regard to the adoption or amendment of rules and regulations.

The governing body administering the plan shall report annually to the Legislature and the Governor on the activities of the plan. The report shall contain an actuarial analysis regarding the adequacy of the rates for each coverage for the safeness and soundness of the plan.

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved January 29, 2007.