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NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF **HUMAN SERVICES**

NEWSLETTER | MARCH 2023

NJ FamilyCare Renewals Resume April 1

NJ FAMILY CARE
RENEWAL PACKETS ARE COMING

Update your mailing address at
1-800-701-0710 (TTY: 711)



The state's NJ FamilyCare health insurance program is required by federal law to restart eligibility reviews as of April 1 – and the Department is urging members to ensure the state has their correct contact information.

The federal government in March 2020 temporarily waived Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program requirements to help prevent people from losing health coverage during the pandemic. Under the omnibus spending bill passed by Congress and signed by President Biden in late December, states must [resume eligibility reviews](#) as of April 1.

Human Services must complete eligibility reviews within twelve months for all current members. To ensure reviews are processed in a timely manner, members will be contacted on a rolling basis throughout this period about how to renew coverage.

To update their contact information, NJ FamilyCare members should call their NJ FamilyCare health plan or [1-800-701-0710](tel:1-800-701-0710) (TTY: 711).

"We want NJ FamilyCare members to be informed about renewing coverage," Commissioner Sarah Adelman said. "We're asking members to make sure their address, email and phone number are up to date with NJ FamilyCare, and to be on the lookout for a renewal letter in the mail over the coming months. If you get this important mailing, please complete your renewal form by the deadline to help avoid any gap in your coverage."

Resuming eligibility checks means some NJ FamilyCare members may no longer qualify and will be disenrolled.

Those who no longer qualify because their income is too high may be eligible to obtain health coverage through New Jersey's Official Health Insurance Marketplace, [Get Covered New Jersey](#), and may be able to get help paying for premiums.

Some individuals may no longer qualify for Medicaid but will qualify for Medicare.

In both situations, NJ FamilyCare will assist by transferring account information to the marketplace or to a Medicare counselor for review.

"We've been particularly focused on ensuring that members provide their up-to-date contact information, including mailing addresses, to ensure they can successfully complete the eligibility renewal process when it's their turn," Deputy Commissioner for Health Services Lisa Asare said. "Our goal is to ensure members are fully informed about this important process. The continuity of their care is very important."

"If you're a NJ FamilyCare member, please make sure we know where to send your renewal letter," said Assistant Commissioner Jennifer Langer Jacobs, who directs NJ FamilyCare. "If you moved, make sure we have your address, email, and phone number. We do not want you to miss this important mailing."

Community organizations and individuals interested in helping with outreach can find more information and printable materials in 21 languages by visiting the [StayCoveredNJ](#) web site.

[Read more](#)



requirements to help prevent
people from losing health coverage.

Check out our short message for the latest information on the resuming of required eligibility reviews in April.



NJ
HUMAN
SERVICES

de elegibilidad para ayudar a evitar que las personas perdieran la cobertura médica.

Vea nuestro mensaje corto para info. más reciente sobre la continuación de las revisiones de elegibilidad requeridas en abril.

ATTENTION

NJ FAMILY CARE MEMBERS

Beware of renewal scams. Other states are reporting that members have received illegitimate messages claiming to be from their Medicaid agency. Scammers may pretend to be from a legitimate organization or a government agency using phone, text or email – but their goal is to steal from you.

NJ FamilyCare and its health plans send text messages to members, but we will **never**:

Charge or ask for money from individuals to enroll or re-enroll.

Threaten legal action or to seize your bank account.

Require payment by gift card, prepaid debit card, Internet currency or mailed cash.

Pressure anyone for personal information or demand secrecy.



Do not share banking or credit card information with anyone that calls you claiming to represent NJ FamilyCare, the Department of Human Services, the Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services or your NJ FamilyCare health plan.

Don't hesitate to call us at **1-800-701-0710 (TTY: 711)**
or visit **www.njfamilycare.org** for assistance.



State of New Jersey
Phil Murphy, Governor
Sheila Oliver, Lt. Governor



Department of Human Services
Sarah Adelman, Commissioner

NJ FAMILY CARE

Human Services Initiates Community-Based Program for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities and Co-Occurring Behavioral Needs



Human Services has initiated new community-based behavioral health stabilization group homes for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Commissioner Sarah Adelman and [YAI, Inc.](#) recently held a ribbon-cutting to mark the opening of the first of the three four-bedroom homes that will be staffed with professionals trained to help prevent and stabilize behavioral crises. YAI received a \$4 million contract to develop the homes to serve individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities experiencing behavioral challenges that make it temporarily unsafe to live at home.

“This home – and the ones to follow – provide a homelike setting for individuals to receive the care and support they need to stabilize so they can return home safely,” Commissioner Adelman said. “The development and launch of this home is an important milestone in our work to support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities so they can live and thrive in the community. We know there is

a need for these behavioral health stabilization homes and we look forward to the positive results of this new program.”

“These homes will help individuals remain in the community and avoid hospitalization or the need for longer-term institutional care,” Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services Kaylee McGuire said. “We want individuals to feel safe and supported, and being in a warm, caring home environment staffed with trained professionals is always the best option.”

“This program will provide highly individualized behavioral health stabilization services to the individuals served by the state and their families,” said Assistant Commissioner Jonathan Seifried, who directs the Division of Developmental Disabilities. “The program is built around an evidence-based, solutions-focused approach to crisis intervention for individuals with I/DD and mental health needs.”

“YAI’s person-centered philosophy of support is perfectly aligned with the goals of this home,” said Amanda Duva Gannon, Director of Community-Based Behavioral Health Stabilization Homes for YAI’s growing New Jersey service menu. “Building on the strengths of the people we support, YAI has a history offering behavioral stabilization support. We look forward to making a real difference in the lives of those supported in these programs.”

[Read more](#)



Human Services Launches Grant Application to Help Child Care Providers Increase Services Available to Working Families



NEED HELP WITH CHILD CARE?

New Jersey's child care assistance program helps eligible families pay for child care costs, find available child care options and more.

Visit www.childcarenj.gov to learn more.



Licensed child care centers and Head Start/Early Head Start programs can now apply online for the Thriving by Three Infant and Toddler Child Care Grant to help providers expand their capacity for infants and toddlers, and increase high-quality child care services available to families.

The [Thriving by Three grant program](#), created by a [law](#) signed by Governor Phil Murphy in 2022, will help support the development and creation of infant and toddler slots in child care settings, and provide technical assistance to eligible child care providers for the expansion of child care spaces.

Eligible programs can apply for the Thriving by Three grants through the [New Jersey Child Care Information System](#).

“Access to affordable child care is a necessity for many parents,” Governor Phil Murphy said. “Investing in our child care providers means investing in working families and local communities throughout our state. I encourage providers to apply for these Thriving by Three grants to help expand their capacity to offer high-quality child care for families across New Jersey.”

“These new state investments continue our goal to make quality and affordable child care a reality to New Jersey’s working families,” Commissioner Sarah Adelman said. “These grants are another step by our Administration to strengthen our early childhood education system and provide more access to high-quality child care services to working families. Through these grants, providers can grow their infant and toddler capacity and receive critical support and training to improve their overall quality, receive a rating through Grow NJ Kids and be eligible for a higher reimbursement rate.”

The \$28 million grant program includes \$20 million allocated to Human Services’ [Division of Family Development](#) and \$8 million to the [New Jersey Economic Development Authority](#), in collaboration with the [Department of Children and Families’ Office of Licensing](#).

[Read more](#)

Governor Murphy Signs Legislation Codifying Opioid Recovery & Remediation Fund

Reasons for recovery...



CALL 844-REACHNJ

SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration



Governor Phil Murphy has signed a [bill](#) to codify the Opioid Recovery and Remediation Advisory Council into law and establish an Opioid Recovery and Remediation Fund – building on steps taken last year to help determine how best to utilize opioid settlement funds to address the opioid crisis.

New Jersey and counties and municipalities throughout the state have signed onto nationwide settlement agreements with several opioid manufacturers and distributors for their involvement in the ongoing opioid epidemic. Over the next two decades, more than \$600 million in funds from settlements will be divided amongst the participayomh governments.

“This legislation will further enable our ongoing efforts to address the impact of the opioid crisis on our state,” Governor Murphy said. “With thorough input from subject matter experts and those with lived experiences regarding the use of these settlement funds, we have the opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of countless New Jersey residents and communities that have been affected by this

crisis.”

The legislation establishes a non-lapsing fund within the Department of Treasury, where the state’s settlement funds will be deposited and distributed as determined with recommendations from the [Opioid Recovery and Remediation Advisory Council](#).

Human Services is the lead agency for allocation and disbursement of the funding.

“I thank the Governor and the legislative sponsors for codifying the work of the Council to help ensure that settlement funds are used effectively for years to come,” Commissioner Sarah Adelman said. “The Council has already begun its important work and through this new law, will remain focused on funding strategies to save lives, end the epidemic and support people and communities harmed by this crisis.”

[Read more](#)

Maternity Action Plan



Deputy Commissioner of Health Services Lisa Asare joined the [New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute's Maternity Action Plan](#) conference to discuss Human Services' work to improve maternal and infant health as part of the First Lady's [NurtureNJ](#) effort.

Stakeholders focused on making New Jersey the [safest](#) and most equitable place to give birth and raise a child.



Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Proclamation

WHEREAS, developmental disabilities manifest during the formative years of life, before the age of 22, and are lifelong in duration, resulting in the continuing need for a variety of services designed to support full inclusion in community life; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that approximately two percent of the United States population has an intellectual or developmental disability, which translates to approximately 178,000 children and adults in New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Departments of Human Services, Health, Education, and Children and Families work with hundreds of partner organizations, agencies and individuals throughout the state to provide services to New Jersey residents with developmental disabilities; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that more than 30,000 state residents work as direct-support professionals for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are living at home or in group homes, supervised apartments or developmental centers, as well as providing support to individuals in employment and day programs; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Human Services, through its Division of Developmental Disabilities, offers services for adults age 21 and older through the Community Care Program and the Supports Program, which operate with both federal and state funding contributions, to enhance the resources available to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Children and Families, through its Division of the Children's System of Care, offers services for children and youth up to age 21 through an array of in-community, residential treatment and family support services, which operate with both federal and state funding contributions, to enhance the resources available to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey's system of services and supports has grown and evolved through its partnership with individuals who have intellectual and developmental disabilities, their family members, and the community service providers that deliver the direct support necessary for our State's residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities to thrive; and

WHEREAS, the efforts of disability advocates, related professionals, and our New Jersey State legislators and leadership continue to keep the needs of the disability community at the forefront of our State's concerns; and

WHEREAS, our Administration will advance initiatives to promote quality services and supports, for persons of all ages with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and increase community living and employment opportunities for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Philip D. Murphy, Governor of the State of New Jersey, do hereby proclaim:

MARCH 2023

AS

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
AWARENESS MONTH

in New Jersey.

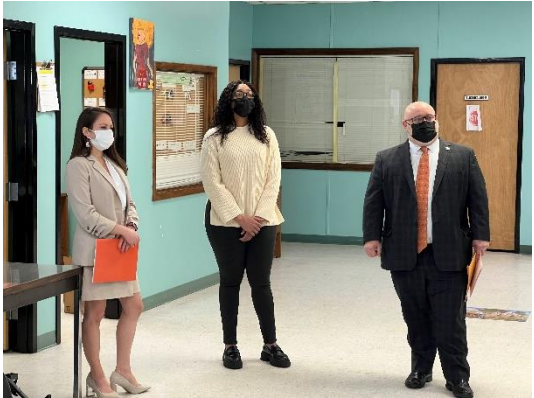
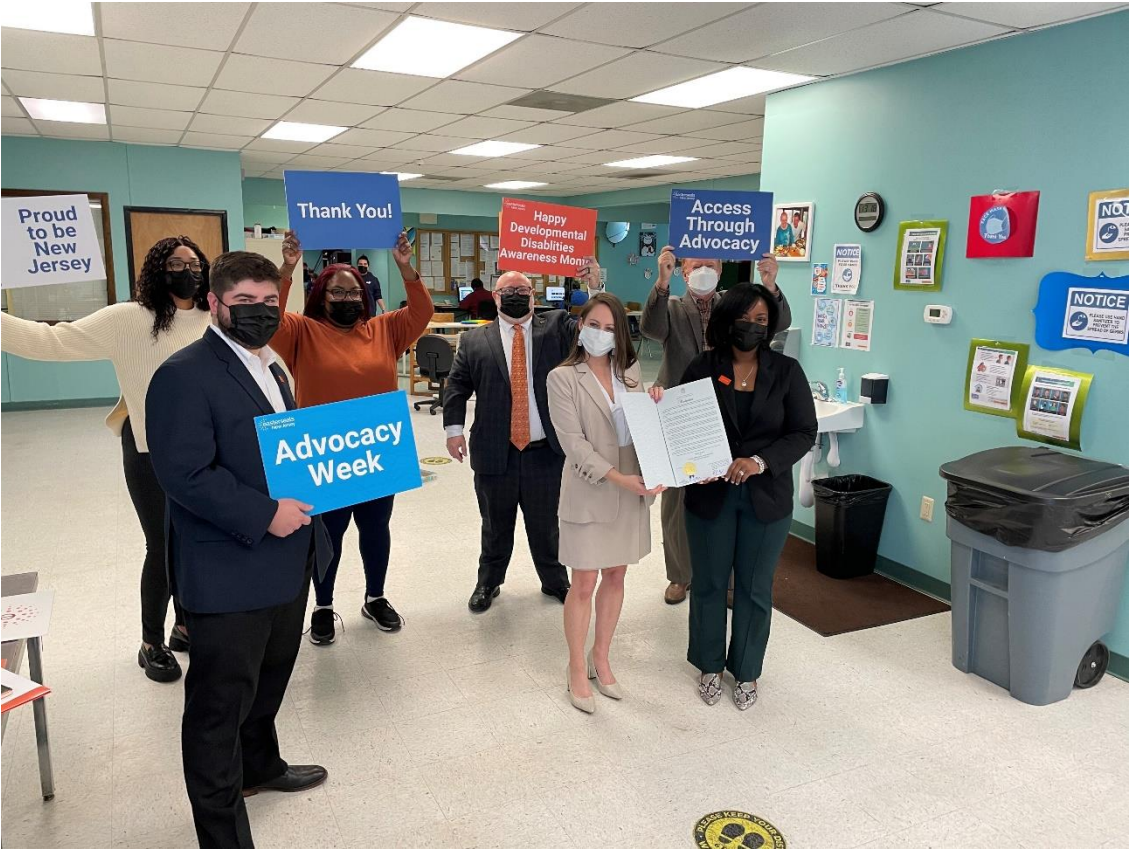



Lt. GOVERNOR

GIVEN, under my hand and the Great Seal of the State of New Jersey, this seventh day of February in the year two thousand twenty-three, the two hundred forty-seventh year of the Independence of the United States.


GOVERNOR

Governor Murphy declared March 2023 as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month with a proclamation re-emphasizing how his Administration "will advance initiatives to promote quality services and supports, and increase community living and employment opportunities for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities."





Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services Kaylee McGuire and Assistant Commissioner Jonathan Seifried joined [Easterseals'](#) Advocacy Week as part of [Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month](#).



Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services Kaylee McGuire and Assistant Commissioner Jonathan Seifried also [visited](#) the Red Ribbon Academy operated by Community Options in Wayne. The program celebrated its 10th anniversary with a fashion show, and Deputy Commissioner McGuire and

Assistant Commissioner Seifried presented the Governor's Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month proclamation.



Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services Kaylee McGuire and Assistant Commissioner Jonathan Seifried also toured the [Sussex County Arc's](#) Eickmann Center in Newton, where they joined a Developmental Disabilities Month celebration and presented the Governor's proclamation. They also toured an agency day programs and its [food pantry](#).

World Down Syndrome Day



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Proclamation

WHEREAS, Down syndrome occurs when an individual has additional genetic material, such as a full or partial extra copy of chromosome 21; and

WHEREAS, approximately 400,000 Americans have Down syndrome and about 6,000 babies are born with Down syndrome each year, meaning that Down syndrome occurs in about 1 in every 700 babies; and

WHEREAS, Down syndrome remains the most common chromosomal condition diagnosed in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Down syndrome is a genetic condition which alters the course of development and causes characteristic physical traits, and each person with Down syndrome is a unique individual and may possess these characteristics to different degrees; and

WHEREAS, individuals with Down syndrome are joyful reminders of the beauty and diversity of nature;

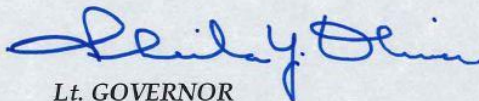
NOW, THEREFORE, I, Philip D. Murphy, Governor of the State of New Jersey, do hereby proclaim:

MARCH 21, 2023
AS
DOWN SYNDROME DAY

in New Jersey.



GIVEN, under my hand and the Great Seal of the State of New Jersey, this seventh day of February in the year two thousand twenty-three, the two hundred forty-seventh year of the Independence of the United States.


Lt. GOVERNOR


GOVERNOR

Governor Murphy marked World Down Syndrome Day with a proclamation on March 21.

Social Work Month



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Proclamation

WHEREAS, the profession of Social Work was established in the late 19th century to address economic and social justice issues; and

WHEREAS, Social Work is a career calling that focuses on the wellbeing and structural dynamics of individuals, families, groups and communities; and

WHEREAS, Social Workers are dedicated to enhancing the lives of people in every age group, race, culture, gender and religion, every day through advocacy and empowerment; and

WHEREAS, the 2023 Social Work Month theme, "Social Work Breaks Barriers" embodies how Social Workers empower individuals, families, communities and societies to overcome challenges, fight social injustices and reach their goals; and

WHEREAS, the Social Work Profession is one of the fastest growing careers in the United States that provides unique education and training, to support individuals, families and communities through complex issues; and

WHEREAS, Social Workers are the largest group of mental health care providers in the United States, working daily to help thousands of Americans overcome mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety; and

WHEREAS, Social Workers are on the frontlines of the nation's opioid addiction crisis, helping people get the treatment they need and prevail over substance use disorders; and

WHEREAS, Social Workers have helped people cope with death and grief and communities recover from natural disasters that are increasingly fueled by our warming climate, including hurricanes, drought and flooding; and

WHEREAS, Social Workers work in many sectors of society including government, schools, universities, non-profit and faith-based agencies, the military, and mental health and health care facilities to address the unique needs of individuals, families and communities; and

WHEREAS, Social Workers believe that each person has dignity and worth and that there is no limit to human potential; and

WHEREAS, Social Workers have helped this nation live up to its values by successfully advocating for equal rights for all, including individuals who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, individuals who identify as LGBTQIA+, people of every race and creed, people with disabilities, people with mental illness, and more;

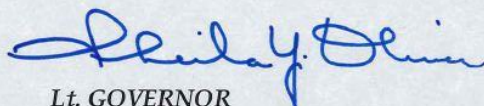
NOW, THEREFORE, I, Philip D. Murphy, Governor of the State of New Jersey, do hereby proclaim:

MARCH 2023 AS SOCIAL WORK MONTH

in New Jersey.



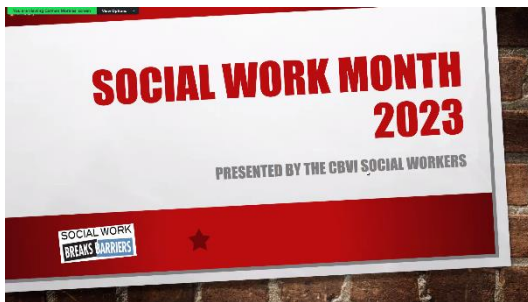
GIVEN, under my hand and the Great Seal of the State of New Jersey, this seventh day of February in the year two thousand twenty-three, the two hundred forty-seventh year of the Independence of the United States.


Lt. GOVERNOR


GOVERNOR

Governor Murphy declared March as Social Work Month in recognition of how social workers have "helped this nation live up to its values."

The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired led by Executive Director Dr. Bernice Davis held a ceremony honoring social workers, which featured Deputy Commissioner for Social Services Elisa Neira [presenting](#) the governor's proclamation.



Brain Injury Awareness Month



Traumatic Brain Injury Fund

Provides services and supports that enable individuals with brain injuries to live in the community and maximize their independence.



Governor Murphy declared March 2023 as Brain Injury Awareness Month in New Jersey to promote education, outreach, prevention, advocacy and support services to all persons affected by a brain injury and to the general public.

The Traumatic Brain Injury Fund managed by the Division of Disability Services provides New Jersey residents of any age, who have survived a traumatic brain injury, the opportunity to access the brain injury related services and supports they need to live in the community. Learn more [here](#).



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Proclamation

WHEREAS, 2.8 million Americans sustain a traumatic brain injury each year, and an estimated 5.3 million Americans are living with disabilities caused by brain injury; and

WHEREAS, there are more than 200,000 hospitalizations related to traumatic brain injuries each year, and more than 64,000 Americans die annually as a result of traumatic brain injury; and

WHEREAS, in New Jersey, approximately 12,000 - 15,000 individuals sustain brain injuries from traumatic events annually, of which 1,000 are fatal; and

WHEREAS, there are an estimated 175,000 New Jersey residents who have disabilities resulting from brain injury; and

WHEREAS, the highest rates of traumatic brain injury occur among individuals under 35 years of age and rise sharply after age 65; and

WHEREAS, people with a brain injury often have perceptual, physical, emotional and/or psychiatric problems with a combination of cognitive impairment; impaired interpersonal skills, memory loss, impaired problem solving skills, slowness in thought processing, speech disorders, physical deficits and epilepsy; and

WHEREAS, the only cure for a brain injury is prevention, and public awareness is critical to achieve that goal, as well as to enhance the recovery process of all persons affected by a brain injury; and

WHEREAS, Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey provides education, outreach, prevention, advocacy and support services to all persons affected by a brain injury and to the general public;

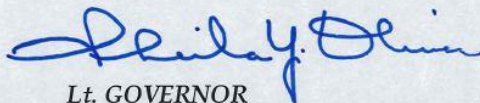
NOW, THEREFORE, I, Philip D. Murphy, Governor of the State of New Jersey, do hereby proclaim:

**MARCH 2023
AS
BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS MONTH**

in New Jersey.



GIVEN, under my hand and the Great Seal of the State of New Jersey, this seventh of February in the year two thousand twenty-three, the two hundred forty-seventh year of the Independence of the United States.


Lt. GOVERNOR


GOVERNOR

Highlighting GetSetUp

Division of Aging Services Deputy Director Melissa Chalker discuss the [GetSetUp](#) program with the [New Jersey Advocates for Aging Well](#). GetSetUp is an interactive online learning community that provides free, live virtual classes for New Jerseyans ages 60 and older.'" data-bbox="153 238 844 538"/>

njaaw
NEW JERSEY ADVOCATES
FOR AGING WELL

JAG award-winning
AGING INSIGHTS
Episode 136

GetSetUp
New Jersey!

Guest: Melissa Chalker, MSW
Deputy Division Director
Division of Aging Services

Watch [Division of Aging Services](#) Deputy Director Melissa Chalker discuss the [GetSetUp](#) program with the [New Jersey Advocates for Aging Well](#). GetSetUp is an interactive online learning community that provides free, live virtual classes for New Jerseyans ages 60 and older.

Commissioner Adelman Honored



Commissioner Adelman was recognized by the [Burlington County commissioners](#) on International Women's Day.

“Thank you for using your platform to lift up women in our community who are doing mission-driven work to help others,” Commissioner Adelman [stated](#).

Also honored was Burlington Township Councilwoman Joyce Paul and Caisse Gore, a Moorestown teacher and founder of the Jadon Strong Foundation.

“Commissioner Sarah Adelman, Caisse Gore and Councilwoman Joyce Paul have remarkable stories and are doing great things for Burlington County and our communities,” [Burlington County Commissioner Allison Eckel said](#). “By spotlighting them, we hope to inspire more women to step forward and take on leadership roles to build on Burlington County’s legacy of outstanding women achievers.”

International Women’s Day 2023



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2023



Sarah Adelman
Commissioner



Lisa Asare
*Deputy Commissioner
of Health Services*



Andrea Katz
*Deputy Commissioner
of Operations*



Kaylee McGuire
*Deputy Commissioner
for Aging and
Disability Services*



Elisa Neira
*Deputy Commissioner
for Social Services*



Johanna Calle
*Director
Office of
New Americans*



Dr. Bernice Davis
*Executive Director
Commission for the Blind
and Visually Impaired*



Elizabeth Hill
*Executive Director
Division of the Deaf
and
Hard of Hearing*



Jennifer Langer Jacobs
*Assistant Commissioner
Division of Medical Assistance
and Health Services*



Natasha Johnson
*Assistant Commissioner
Division of
Family Development*



Denise Meckel
*Assistant Commissioner
Human Resources*



Valerie Mielke
*Assistant Commissioner
Division of Mental Health
and Addiction Services*



Peri Nearon
*Executive Director
Division of
Disability Services*



Deborah Robinson
*Director
Office of Program Integrity
and Accountability*



Louise Rush
*Assistant Commissioner
Division of
Aging Services*

On International Women's Day, Human Services [recognized](#) its women leaders, all of whom are committed to providing vital supports to residents throughout New Jersey.

**Congratulations to Assistant Commissioner
Louise Rush**



[Division of Aging Services](#) Assistant Commissioner Louise Rush received the 2023 Public Service Award from the [National PACE Association](#) for her commitment to inclusive care for older adults.

PACE stands for Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly, and is an innovative Medicare program that provides frail individuals age 55 and older comprehensive medical and social services coordinated and provided by an interdisciplinary team of professionals in a community-based center and in their homes. It helps program participants delay or avoid long-term nursing home care.

Visit [here](#) for more information.

New Jersey Age-Friendly State Advisory Council Listening Sessions





The New Jersey Age-Friendly Advisory Council held two virtual listening sessions to hear from older adults and those who care for them about what the state can do to promote inclusive communities. Watch them both above.

Congratulations to Human Services' 2023 Social Innovation Award Winners!

Congratulations to the Human Services staff who won several awards in the 2023 Social Innovation Awards sponsored by the Social Innovations Journal.

Award winners include:

[Division of Disability Services](#) **Executive Director Peri Nearon – 1st Place**

Category: Healthy Communities

[Division of Developmental Disabilities](#) **Director of Housing and Resource Development Amy Scartocci - 1st Place**

Category: Housing and Community Development

[Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund](#) Deputy Director LorieAnn Wilkerson-Leconte - 1st Place
Category - Innovative Funder Strategies

Meanwhile, participants in DDS' Inclusive Healthy Communities (IHC) grant program also won awards:

Jennifer Papa, City Green – 1st Place

Julia Taylor, Trenton Health Team – 2nd Place

Category: Innovative Models for Achieving Health Equity

Dr. Wendy Aita and Dr. Jennifer LeComte, Rowan Integrated Special Needs Center – First Place

Category: Innovation in Services for Special Populations, Including People with Intellectual Disability and/or Autism, Mental Health Challenges, and Older Adults

Family Resource Network – Third Place

Category: Community Voice Impact

Ellie Willoughby, The J-Cares Intern Program, A Department of Developmental Disabilities recognized program located at the Shimon & Sara Birnbaum JCC in Bridgewater, NJ – RUNNER UP

Category: Innovative Partnerships

Dan Rhoton, Hopeworks – 1st Place

Category: Workforce Development

Kate Kelly, Integrated Community Project Manager, Supportive Housing Association of New Jersey – 1st Place

Category: Legislative Impact

Visit [here](#) to learn more about the program in partnership with Rutgers' Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy.

And visit [here](#) to see the latest announcement about available IHC grant funding.

Visiting an IHC Arts Program



Meanwhile Executive Director Nearon and Assistant Director Jacqui Moskowitz visited the [Paul Robeson Community School for the Arts](#) in New Brunswick, where IHC grantee [Young Audiences](#) has implemented an arts program for a first-grade class of children with special needs.

Making an Impact: Assistant Commissioner Valerie Mielke



More than 50% of individuals living in the United States will be diagnosed with a mental illness at some time in their lives, and one in five will experience a mental illness in a given year. In addition, one in seven individuals aged 12 or older reports experiencing a substance use disorder – making these conditions among the most common health conditions in the U.S.

At DMHAS, we assess and identify mental health and addiction service needs across the state and fund and support a wide range of initiatives. We continuously look for ways to reach communities to address misperceptions of behavioral health conditions; increase access to and awareness of treatment and services; and provide hope that recovery is attainable as it's all about one overarching goal: to save lives.

– Valerie L. Mielke, MSW

Congratulation to [Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services](#) Assistant Commissioner Valerie Mielke, who was [highlighted](#) by the state as part of a Black History Month social media campaign.

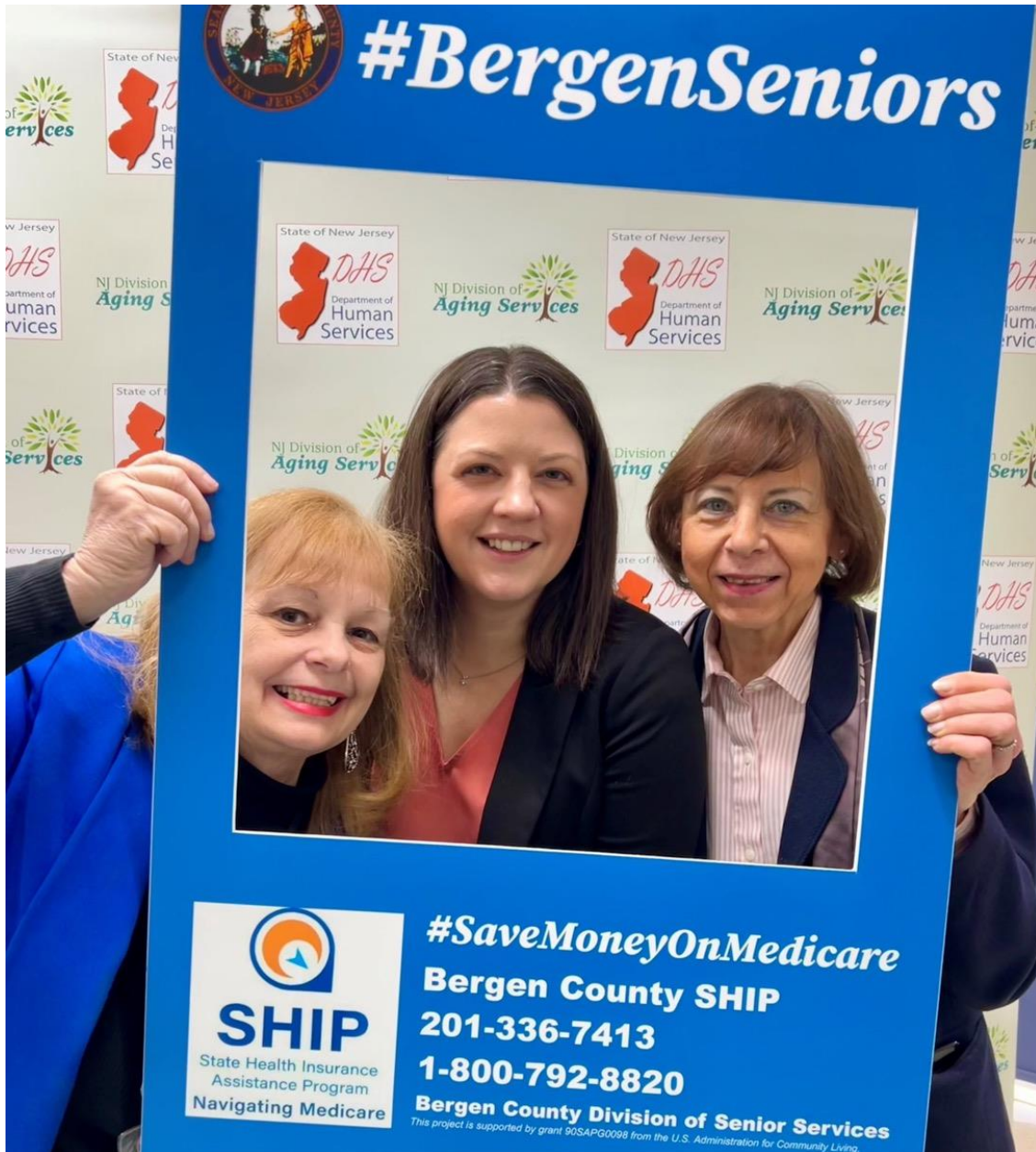
[Noted](#) Commissioner Sarah Adelman: "Thank you for your commitment to behavioral health and public service, Valerie! You are truly [#MakingAnImpact](#) for millions of New Jerseyans."

Recognizing the Office of Program Integrity and Accountability



Commissioner Adelman visited with staff from the [Office of Program Accountability and Integrity](#) to recognize their important work to make programs stronger and safer for those Human Services serves.

COVID-19 Boosters & Information for Older Adults



Lorraine Joewono, [Bergen County Division of Senior Services](#) Executive Director; Melissa Chalker, Deputy Director of Human Services' [Division of Aging Services](#); and Carol Wagner, [Fair Lawn Health Department](#) Director; joined together for a COVID-19 booster clinic and information session about services available for older adults.

Cutting the Ribbon in Somerset County



Commissioner Sarah Adelman and Assistant Commissioner Valerie Mielke [helped](#) cut the ceremonial ribbon on the new Zufall Health facility at the Richard Hall Community Health and Wellness Center in Bridgewater to provide primary and dental care to residents of Somerset County.

The partnership supports care coordination to ensure that Richard Hall's mental health and substance use clients have holistic wellness plans, while also expanding access to Zufall Health's services to area residents. The inclusion of Zufall's services at Richard Hall allows integrated care coordinators to provide complete health care at one location.

Remembering Judith Heumann



Sarah Adelman
@sarahmadelman



Sometimes someone truly changes the world. Judith Heumann - instrumental in passing historic disability rights laws - was one such person. @NJ DHS mourns her passing. She will be missed & her legacy will endure as we continue striving toward her goal of a more inclusive world.



Kaylee McGuire
@KayleeMcGuire_



Judith Heumann was “mother of the disability rights movement” because her unrelenting spirit led to laws built on an undeniable idea- disabled individuals deserve equal access. [@NJ DHS](#) honors her memory & will never waver from her commitment of creating a better world for all.

Highlighting Office of New Americans Programs and Services



[Office of New Americans](#) Director Johanna Calle participated in the Not Your Same Sources immigration panel hosted by the Center for Cooperative Media at Montclair State to discuss immigration in New Jersey and Human Services' programs and services available to assist immigrants, asylum-seekers and refugees.

Support Coordinator Competency Survey



The [Division of Developmental Disabilities](#) in collaboration with [The Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities at Rutgers](#) has launched the Money Follows Person Support Coordinator Competency and Capacity Building Steering Committee to make recommendations in the development of a certification program for support coordinators.

The committee is seeking input from the New Jersey disability community to learn about the competency and skill needs of New Jersey's support coordinators.

Stakeholders are encouraged to provide input by completing the below survey.

The information obtained will be used to inform the committee's recommendations.

The online survey can be found at: https://rutgers.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ezguzZYGa6kgFlc

The survey will be open until April 12.

Problem Gambling Awareness Month



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Proclamation

WHEREAS, problem gambling is a significant public health issue affecting New Jersey residents of all ages and racial and ethnic backgrounds in communities throughout the state, and has a significant societal and economic cost; and

WHEREAS, an estimated 4% of youth and almost twice this percentage of college students have a gambling disorder, New Jersey has developed gambling prevention, outreach and education programs targeted to youth/young adults; and

WHEREAS, most individuals with a gambling disorder also have a mental health and/or alcohol/substance use diagnosis, New Jersey has funded 15 treatment providers to serve individuals with these co-occurring disorders, in addition to funding training on gambling disorder and its treatment; and

WHEREAS, problem gambling is a treatable disorder and proper management is invaluable in minimizing the harm to individuals, their families and society as a whole; and

WHEREAS, promoting an awareness month provides individuals in the problem gambling prevention and treatment community with an opportunity to educate the public and policymakers about the social and financial effectiveness of services available for problem gambling; and

WHEREAS, healthcare providers are encouraged to screen individuals for problem gambling and to assist with access to treatment; and

WHEREAS, numerous individuals, professionals and organizations have dedicated themselves to educating the public about problem gambling and the availability and success of treatment;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Philip D. Murphy, Governor of the State of New Jersey, do hereby proclaim:

MARCH 2023

AS

PROBLEM GAMBLING AWARENESS MONTH

in New Jersey.



GIVEN, under my hand and the Great Seal of the State of New Jersey, this twenty-second day of February in the year two thousand twenty-three, the two hundred forty-seventh year of the Independence of the United States.

Richard J. DeLeon
Lt. GOVERNOR

Philip D. Murphy
GOVERNOR

Governor Murphy declared March 2023 as Problem Gambling Awareness Month in New Jersey to raise awareness of problem gambling prevention and treatment. Visit [here](#) to learn more from the Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey. Call 1-800-GAMBLER for 24/7 confidential assistance.



K-9 Appreciation Day



On March 13's K-9 Appreciation Day, Human Services highlighted its [Human Services Police](#) K-9 Unit dogs, who help officers protect and serve the state's most vulnerable citizens. Many thanks to Logan, Spike, Hunter and Jupiter for their dedicated service!

Hunter, top left, has been in service since February 2021. Hunter loves to eat milk bone treats and from time to time he gets to enjoy a nice piece of chicken on his days off.

Logan, top right, has been in service since May 2020. Logan's favorite treats are canine kibble. He also gets a piece of raw chicken from time to time.

Spike, bottom left, has been in service since March 2019. Spike really enjoys his special treat at night which consists of canine kibble and the occasional peanut butter sandwich.

Jupiter, bottom right, has been in service since February 2021. Jupiter enjoys buddy softies treats after a long day at work.

SPOTLIGHTS ON NJ HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS



LEAP
LIBRARY EQUAL
ACCESS PROGRAM

Provides free computer training and assistive technology classes for residents age 55+ who are experiencing vision loss.

 **NJCBVI**
NEW JERSEY COMMISSION FOR
THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

 **NJ**
Human
Services

The Legal Representation for Children & Youth Program

Providing free legal services
to children and youth in
immigration proceedings.

Call or text: 201-305-9217
Email: uacscreening@NJCIC.org



[NJ SNAP](#) | [NJ FAMILYCARE](#) | [NJHELPS](#)

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