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NEW JERSEY HUMAN SERVICES

NEWSLETTER I OCTOBER 2026



Commissioner Cha Testifies on Federal Medicaid and SNAP Changes and New Jersey's Response

New Jersey Human Services Commissioner Stephen Cha testified before the Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee on October 22, outlining the anticipated impact of federal Medicaid and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) changes and the state's efforts to help residents maintain access to critical services.

"We do not want any eligible resident to lose help because of a letter they did not understand, a form they could not complete, or a deadline they could not meet," **Commissioner Cha said**.

Commissioner Cha discussed how H.R. 1, signed into law by President Trump in July 2025, reduces federal support for Medicaid and SNAP, increases administrative requirements, and shifts costs to states and counties.

New federal requirements beginning January 1 will require certain adults ages 19 through 64 covered through the Medicaid Expansion to demonstrate qualifying work, volunteer, or school activities and renew coverage every six months rather than annually. State estimates indicate that more than 300,000 people could lose coverage by the end of State fiscal year 2028, though projections vary.

"Most people who lose coverage will still be eligible," **Commissioner Cha emphasized**, highlighting the importance of helping residents navigate the new requirements.

The Commissioner urged NJ FamilyCare members to open and respond to program notices promptly.

Beginning in January, members whose compliance cannot be verified electronically will receive renewal applications by mail, followed by reminders through phone calls, text messages, and email. Residents can visit

FederalMedicaidChanges.nj.gov and use the NJ FamilyCare Activity Requirements Checker to learn more.

As **Commissioner Cha reminded** the Committee, “The way for members to keep up is to check their mail.”

Federal changes have also affected certain lawfully present noncitizens’ eligibility for federally funded Medicaid. DHS mailed notices to nearly 24,000 members whose status could not be verified and provided information in nine languages. As of October 1, 10,399 people had not responded and their coverage ended. **Commissioner Cha stressed** that “a missed response is not a finding of ineligibility” and that terminated members have the right to a fair hearing. Members who receive a notice can call 1-833-635-7060 (TTY: 711) for assistance.

“People should not assume that receiving a notice means they are ineligible,” **Deputy Commissioner for Health Services Valerie Mielke said.** “If you received an envelope from NJ FamilyCare, please follow the instructions and submit the requested information. That is the best way for us to determine whether you can regain your NJ FamilyCare coverage.”

“New Jersey wants as many people as possible to maintain access to health coverage,” Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services **Assistant Commissioner Gregory Woods said**. “These changes can have serious consequences for people and families who rely on NJ FamilyCare. That is why we continue to urge everyone who received an envelope or a termination notice and believes they may still have a qualifying immigration status to respond, so we can review your information.”

SNAP recipients and state and county agencies also face changes, including expanded work requirements for certain adults and increased state administrative costs. New Jersey is working to mitigate these impacts through

SNAP Navigators, county partnerships, and investments to maintain a $95 minimum SNAP benefit for approximately 40,000 households.

Human Services is also training county eligibility workers, strengthening program communications, and working with community organizations to help residents navigate changing requirements.

Commissioner Cha underscored that Human Services' priorities are to prevent avoidable losses of benefits, strengthen technology and administrative capacity, support county and community partners, and monitor the effects of federal changes. While New Jersey cannot offset every federal reduction, he emphasized the importance of ensuring residents understand what is required of them and have access to assistance when they need it.

"Behind every eligibility determination is a person or a family," **he said**. "We cannot control every federal decision. We can control how thoughtfully we respond and how well we work together."

Read more HERE.

See Updated Information on How the Cuts Will Impact New Jersey Counties:

KEY ENROLLMENT IMPACTS OF H.R. 1: NEW JERSEY COUNTIES



🌐 Watch video for important Medicaid information in 13 languages.

🔗 For more information, visit HERE.

🌐 Available in multiple languages:

Federal changes may affect your health coverage.

🔗 Visit the NJ FamilyCare Checker to find out if these rules apply to you or if you are exempt HERE.





Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Executive Director Elizabeth Hill offers another American Sign Language update on upcoming changes to NJ FamilyCare.

Learn more HERE.



New Jersey Expands NJ FamilyCare-Approved Doula Trainings to 29 Programs

New Jersey has expanded its list of NJ FamilyCare-approved doula trainings to 29, making it possible for more doulas to serve NJ FamilyCare families and helping advance equitable access to doula care.

NJ FamilyCare, the state's Medicaid and CHIP health insurance program, offers doula care as a maternity benefit for its members. It covers about 30,000 New Jersey births each year and provides coverage for doula services. The new list has a total of 29 approved trainings, including most of those that were on the previous list. The list includes New Jersey-based, national, and international doula trainings.

"New Jersey has been a leader in supporting doulas as Medicaid providers, and this new tool and streamlined process for approving additional doula trainings are important steps toward expanding access to doula care," **said Human Services Commissioner Stephen Cha**. "By making it easier for

training organizations to become NJ FamilyCare-approved, more trained doulas can qualify to enroll as community doulas and serve families. We are grateful to every agency who continues to help make New Jersey a safer and more equitable place to deliver and raise a baby."

New Jersey has established transparent minimum standards and a standardized review process to approve doula trainings that meet NJ FamilyCare's doula training requirements. The New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority (NJMIHIA) conducts outreach and provides technical assistance to help training organizations complete the approval packet with detailed information about their curricula. NJMIHIA's own doula training curriculum underwent the same review process. The New Jersey Human Services and the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) share responsibility for reviewing and approving trainings.

"Expanding the approved training list creates more pathways for doulas to serve NJ FamilyCare families," **said Lisa Asare, President and CEO of NJMIHIA**. "Strengthening the doula workforce can help reduce barriers to culturally responsive care and advance more equitable outcomes for mothers and babies. This progress reflects the collaboration of our state partners and training organizations."

Community doulas provide culturally responsive social and emotional support during pregnancy, labor, and delivery and the postpartum period. Research links doula support with lower cesarean birth rates and fewer obstetric interventions. Expanding access to this support is part of New Jersey's work to advance equitable maternal and infant health outcomes.

"New Jersey's growing doula workforce plays an important role in ensuring every family feels supported, heard, and cared for throughout pregnancy, childbirth and beyond. These trainings give doulas the tools to grow their practice, including the certification they need to bill Medicaid, so this essential

work can also be a sustainable career," **said Health Commissioner Dr. Raynard E. Washington.**

Doulas seeking to provide services to NJ FamilyCare members can use the NJ Doula Assistant, an online tool that guides individual doulas through the Fee-for-Service enrollment application.

Read more HERE.



New Jersey Human Services Awards Contracts to Expand Access to Mental Health, Addiction Treatment and Primary Care Services

Human Services Commissioner Stephen Cha announced the award of contracts to community health care providers to expand access to mental health, addiction treatment, and primary care services across the state.

The contracts will support integrated care programs that bring physical health care, mental health services, and addiction treatment together in one location, making it easier for residents to get the care they need. The initiative is designed to improve health outcomes for people living with substance use disorders, mental health conditions, and chronic physical health concerns.

The contracts were awarded to St. James Health for $391,275, and Zufall Health for $274,653.

"Too often people have to navigate multiple systems to get treatment for mental health conditions, addiction, and physical health needs," **Commissioner Cha said.** "These awards will help create more convenient, coordinated care so New Jersey residents can access services in one place and get support for their overall health and well-being."

Through these contracts, providers will offer services including primary care, mental health treatment, addiction treatment, health screenings, care coordination, and connections to additional community resources. The goal is to reduce barriers to care and help people access treatment earlier and more consistently.

"Integrated care programs help ensure that people are treated as whole individuals, not a collection of separate health needs," **Deputy Commissioner for Health Services Valerie Mielke said.** "These investments will help more New Jersey residents access coordinated services that support recovery, wellness, and long-term health."

The providers will work closely with local health care organizations, treatment providers, and community partners to strengthen services and improve access to care in communities throughout New Jersey.

"These funds will help us expand access to care for people who often face significant barriers to treatment," **Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services Assistant Commissioner David Helfand said.** "By bringing primary care, mental health services, and addiction treatment together, we can better meet people where they are and help them achieve healthier, more stable lives."

These awards follow the adoption of rules promulgating a single, integrated license for outpatient health care facilities earlier this year, and progress in expanding accessible mental healthcare through Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics.

Read more HERE.



Avoid Notario Fraud and Immigration Service Scams

Protect Your Money, Your Identity, and Your Immigration Status

In many countries, a *Notario Público* is a trained and licensed legal professional, but in the U.S., most people advertising "notario services" are not licensed attorneys. Notarios frequently exploit people seeking legal help, putting them at risk of immigration detention, deportation, identity theft, and financial fraud.

Getting legitimate legal assistance is essential for understanding immigration options and protecting oneself and one's family.

Human Services and Office of the Attorney General Help Immigrant Communities Recognize and Avoid Immigration Scams

New Jersey Human Services and the Office of the Attorney General are partnering to raise awareness of scams targeting immigrant communities and help individuals seeking immigration services identify reliable, legitimate legal services providers.

The Office of New Americans and the Attorney General's Division of Consumer Affairs have made guidance available online that explains how individuals can find safe legal assistance, recognize potential immigration scams, and file a complaint if they have been victimized. The guidance provides practical information to help individuals protect themselves and their immigration cases from fraud and exploitation. Read the guidance here.

“Having access to accurate and reliable information is essential to empowering immigrant communities to understand their rights, make informed choices, and advocate for themselves and their families. By knowing what to look for, recognizing red flags, and seeking services from qualified and authorized providers, individuals can better protect themselves from fraud and exploitation,” **said Commissioner Stephen Cha**.

"At a time when immigrant families are facing tremendous uncertainty, access to trustworthy information and qualified legal assistance is more important than ever,” **said Attorney General Jennifer Davenport.** “No one should be allowed to exploit that uncertainty for financial gain. We want to help equip New Jersey’s immigrant communities to avoid fraud and turn to us if they believe they have been victimized.”

“There is nothing more reprehensible than taking advantage of people who are in dire need of help. Scammers prey on people’s desperation and exploit their vulnerability, and the results can be devastating. This information can help individuals recognize potential scams and proceed with caution when seeking legal services for these often complex and sensitive matters,” **said Deputy Commissioner for Social Services Michael J. Wilson**.

“It is all too common to hear stories of people who have lost money or put their immigration status at risk because they placed their trust in people who had no intention of helping them. This resource can help protect people who are already in a vulnerable position from putting their cases, and their livelihoods in this country, in the hands of the wrong people,” **said Office of New Americans Executive Director Johanna Calle**.

Read more HERE.

📰 NJ Human Services Op-Ed's 📰

Thieves are stealing SNAP benefits. How NJ can fight back | Opinion

Read Commissioner Stephen Cha and Deputy Commissioner for Social Services Michael J. Wilson’s op-ed on New Jersey's efforts to protect access to food assistance and strengthen SNAP benefit security by transitioning to chip-enabled EBT cards to combat fraud, as President Trump’s budget cuts put food assistance at risk for residents.

Read it HERE.

Los recortes de Trump les pasan factura a las familias más vulnerables de Nueva Jersey

Commissioner Stephen Cha and Department of Health Commissioner Dr. Raynard Washington authored a Spanish-language op-ed in *El Diario* on how President Trump’s budget cuts are putting health coverage at risk for New Jersey residents who have legal status but are not yet U.S. citizens.

Read it HERE.









Human Services leadership participated in the 3rd annual New Jersey Office of the Food Security Advocate Garden State Food Security Summit. Food Security for older adults and the Trump cuts to SNAP and Medicaid were among the topics discussed.







Commissioner Stephen Cha joined Department of Children and Families Commissioner Joseph Ribsam and Department of Health Deputy Commissioner Raquel Mazon Jeffers to highlight collaboration and challenges the departments see in mental health and substance use care to close the New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies (NJAMHAA) fall conference.



NJ Human Services Virtual Budget Listening Session for 2026–27 will take place November 9th at 1 p.m. Below is key information to help you prepare for this year's session. Interested in testifying?

Sign up HERE.

✱ Written testimony is strongly encouraged.



An important message in American Sign Language from Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Director Elizabeth Hill regarding the **Virtual Budget Listening Session** scheduled for November 9th at 1 p.m. Sign Language Interpreters and captioning will be provided making the session fully accessible.

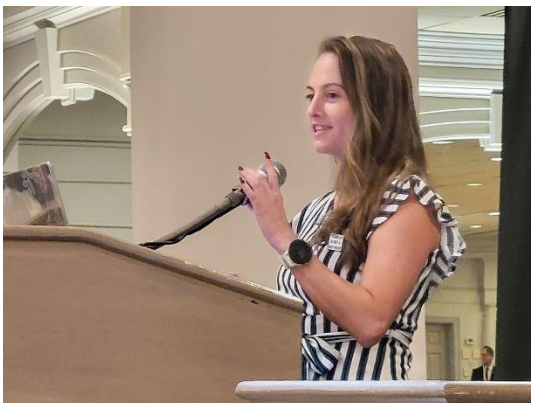
Register HERE.











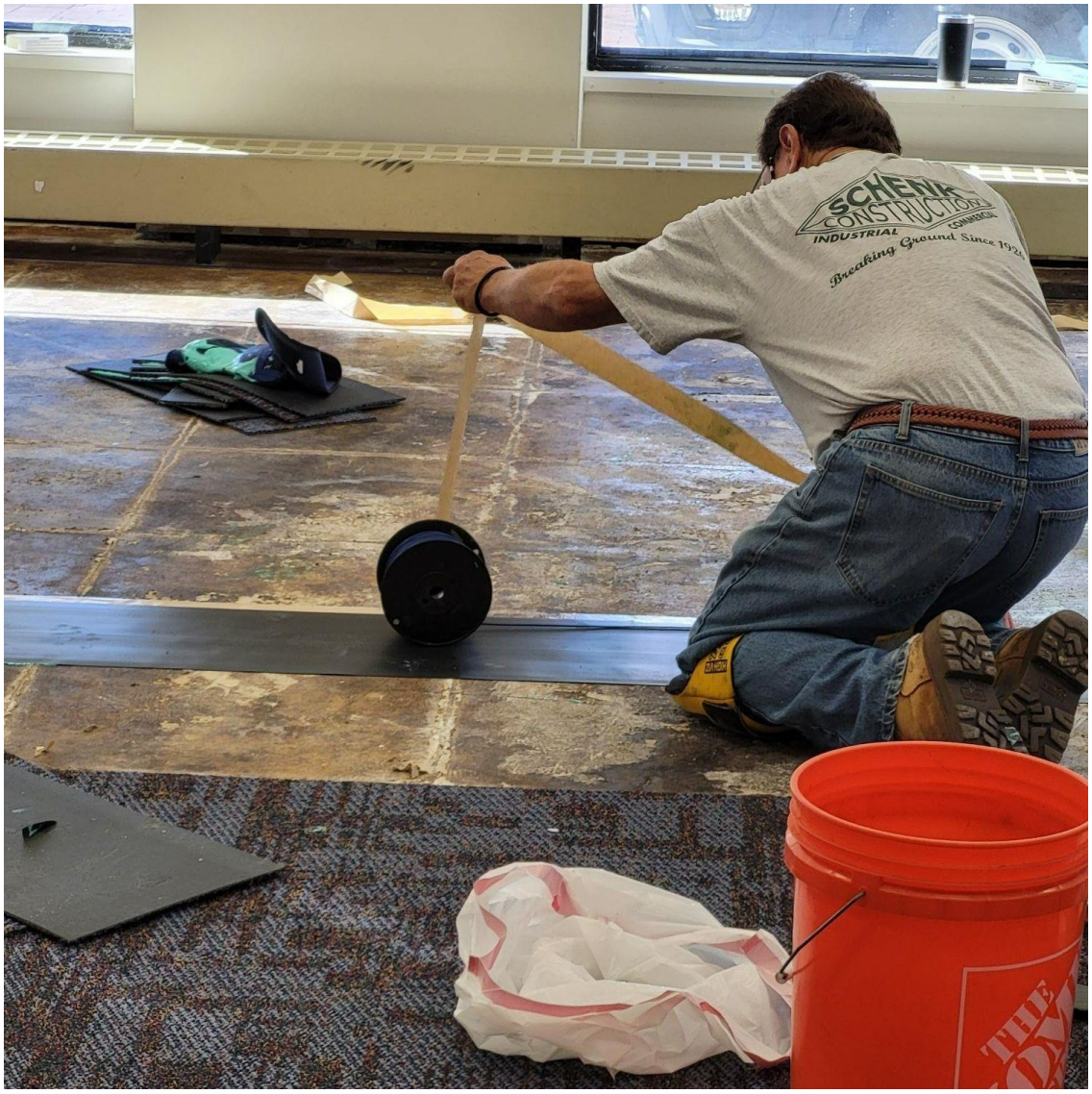
Commissioner Stephen Cha, Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services Kaylee McGuire, and Division of Developmental Disabilities Assistant Commissioner Jonathan Seifried spoke at the New Jersey Self Advocacy Program's annual conference '**Rise Up for Self-Advocacy**'.

Then Commissioner Cha joined Princeton University students in the Global Health Colloquium to talk health care policy.



Staff from the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) Office of Transition to Employment & Adult Life were on hand at Autism NJ's 44th Annual Autism Conference to answer questions and share information about transitioning from school to adult life and the DDD service system. New Jersey schools, agencies,

and other organizations can request to have a DDD exhibit/information table by filling out a Request for DDD Exhibit Table.



The Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is pleased to announce the main conference room at the Department's Trenton building now has

hearing loop systems – an assistive listening technology that can help make spaces more accessible to the deaf and hard of hearing.





The Community of Care Consortium held a robust discussion with Commissioner Stephen Cha and Department of Health Assistant Commissioner Nashon Hornsby. Changing federal funding, getting timely screening, and how to partner with the state were among the hot topics.





Commissioner Stephen Cha, Deputy Commissioner for Social Services Michael Wilson, Division of Family Development Assistant Commissioner Natasha Johnson and other leaders from the Division of Family Development gathered at FulfillNJ to hear directly from SNAP navigators on their experiences.

Learn more about SNAP navigators HERE.





Congrats to Police Officer Faith Mascari who graduated from the Atlantic County Police Academy, Class #32. Officer Mascari was also voted as the Class President. Officer Mascari will be assigned to our Central Region. Welcome to Human Services Police!



Human Services Emergency Management Director Joseph Geleta was among those at the State Emergency Operations Center monitoring the nor'easter. DHSOEM helps coordinate and is always ready for any needed sheltering, feeding, emergency supply, and family reunification response.





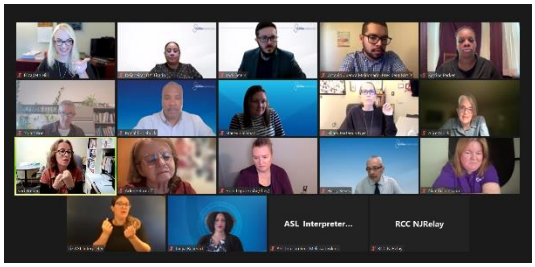
Human Services Emergency Management Director Joe Geleta moderated an Emergency Preparedness
Panel at the AmeriCorps Launch 26 Conference at The College of New Jersey.

Representatives from New Jersey Office of Emergency Management, NJ 211, and Department of Agriculture shared how volunteers can help during a crisis

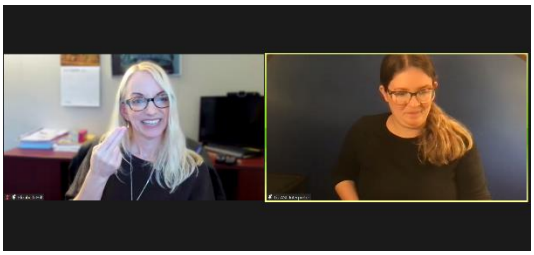


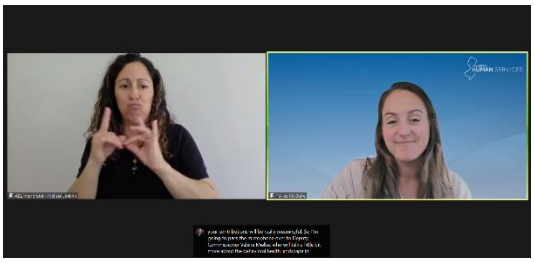


Human Services Emergency Management Director Joseph Geleta gave staff a tour of the state's Regional Operations Intelligence Center today. During times of crisis, the Department works with its partners to provide sheltering, feeding, distribution of emergency supplies and family reunification.









Human Services held its inaugural meeting of the Inclusive Mental Health Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory Committee. Deputy Commissioner for Disability and Aging Services Kaylee McGuire, Deputy Commissioner for Health Services Valerie Mielke, and Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Executive Director Elizabeth Hill provided remarks.

Learn more about the Committee HERE.









Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Executive Director Elizabeth Hill was happy to join city officials at the Deaf Advocacy Group's flag raising ceremony in honor of **Deaf Awareness Month** in Newark.











To highlight **Blindness Awareness Month**, the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, led by Executive Director Dr. Bernice Davis, held its fifth annual Community Outreach Fair at Cheesequake State Park. Activities included exhibits, demonstrations, a guided nature hike, reading Governor Mikie Sherrill's Blindness Awareness Month proclamation, and marking **Breast Cancer Awareness Month**.

To learn more about CBVI's programs and services, visit HERE.







Deputy Commissioner for Social Services Michael J. Wilson was presented with the Thomas W. Kelly Government Service Award by the New Jersey Food Council during its 52nd annual Good Government Breakfast.



Reaching 100 years of age is a remarkable achievement worthy of recognition. Register yourself or a loved one and receive an official recognition certificate from the State of New Jersey. It's free and takes just a few minutes.

Register HERE.





Division of Aging Services staffed a resource table at the Senior Festival Hill. The Division of Aging Services connects seniors to programs and services that can help them save on prescription expenses, assist with Medicaid questions and more. Visit nj.gov/humanservices/doas/ today.


NJ Human Services
Breast Cancer Awareness Walk
2026

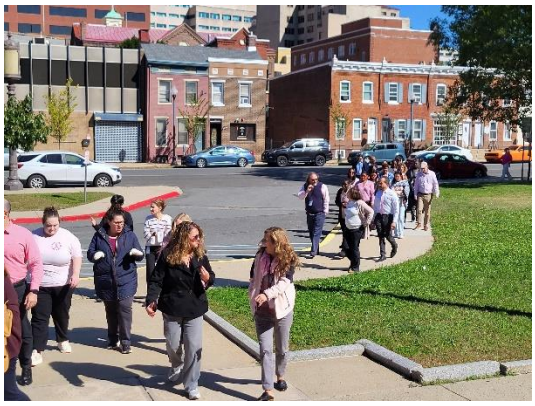

OCTOBER




HOPE
Mothers
Family walk
recovery
LOVE girls
Pink
love
hope
chest
cancer
patient
awareness


Believe











NJ Human Services held it's annual department-wide **Breast Cancer Awareness Walk and Pink Out!** We would like to thank all staff for such

amazing participation. Divisions took lunch breaks to gather, take photos, and walk in support and in memory of those who battled this disease.







October 9th was **Ageism Awareness Day**. Let us work together to reframe aging in our communities and make them more age-friendly.

Learn how you can help make New Jersey more age-friendly HERE.

October 1st was **International Day of Older Persons** and a great time to highlight NJSave!
See if you're eligible to save money on Medicare premiums, prescription costs and other living expenses.

Apply today HERE!





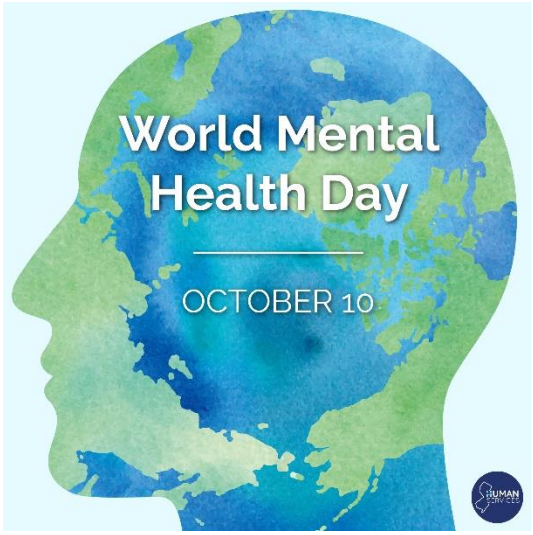
October 6th was **Child Health Day**.
Children are eligible for NJ FamilyCare regardless of immigration status.
Please visit HERE to learn more and apply for affordable health coverage and quality care.

Or call 1-800-701 0710 (TTY: 711)

October 9th was **World Sight Day.** Blindness and vision impairment are major international public health issues.

The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired has programs to help consumers achieve full integration in society through success in employment, independent living and more. For more info, visit our website HERE.





October 10th was **World Mental Health Day**. 988 is a direct 24/7 connection to accessible and compassionate support and resources to anyone experiencing psychiatric or emotional distress or those worried about a loved one.

Call/Text 988 Chat 988lifeline.org

October 15th was **Blind Americans Equality Day**, a day to highlight the contributions of individuals who are blind, deafblind and visually impaired and provide resources to empower them. Visit the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired's website HERE to learn more about our programs and services.



October was **Down Syndrome Awareness Month**. Join us in celebrating the abilities of people with Down syndrome and promoting the fact that they are so much more than just their diagnosis.



NJ SNAP | NJ FAMILYCARE | NJSAVE | NJ HELPS

FOLLOW US!

