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NEWSLETTER | SEPTEMBER 2026

Families First EBT Card

**NEW FEATURES FOR
IMPROVED SECURITY:**

- ✓ **Encrypted Chip**
- ✓ **Tap-to-Pay**
- ✓ **3-Digit Code**



**Human Services Announces EBT Chip Cards
Are Now Available Statewide**

Human Services Commissioner Stephen Cha announced that Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) chip cards have been distributed statewide to residents participating in either the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or the Work First New Jersey (WFNJ) program.

The statewide launch follows a pilot phase during which cards were distributed to SNAP and WFNJ participants residing in Cumberland, Essex, and Mercer counties. Since the pilot launched, there have been hundreds of thousands of successful transactions including more than 100,000 chip transactions, 41,000 tap-to-pay transactions, and 56,000 online purchases.

“We are excited to make these more secure cards available to all residents who participate in SNAP or the WFNJ program. The chip-enabled cards provide an added layer of security and are an important tool in our ongoing efforts to safeguard benefits and protect residents who rely on this assistance from this type of widespread benefit fraud,” **said Commissioner Cha.**

EBT card skimming has been an ongoing problem for EBT cardholders nationwide. It occurs when devices illegally installed on or inside point-of-sale terminals capture card data and record cardholders’ PIN entries. Criminals then use this data to steal from victims’ accounts. While there was a period of time when states were authorized and funded under federal law to replace electronically stolen SNAP benefits, that ended in December 2024.

“Skimming targets some of our most vulnerable residents, including low-income families, children, seniors, and people with disabilities. Losing benefits that cannot be replaced can be devastating. This upgrade will help reduce the risk of skimming and better protect our neighbors who depend on these benefits,”

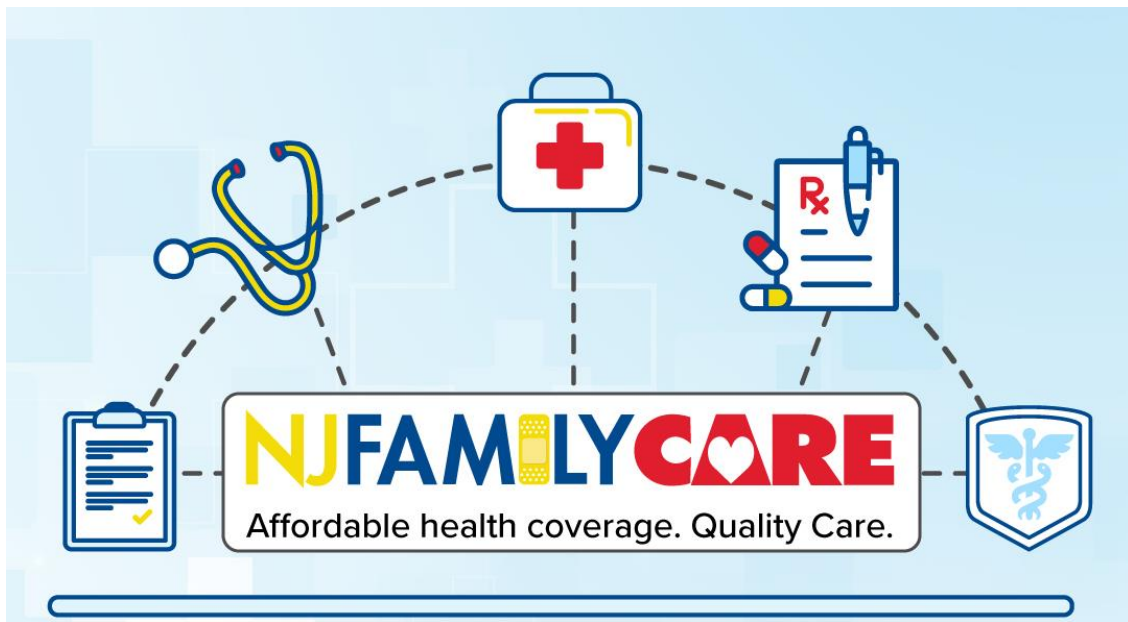
said Deputy Commissioner for Social Services Michael J. Wilson.

SNAP and WFNJ benefits will be automatically transferred to the new cards and can be used as soon as they are activated. Cardholders will have 90 days from the day that they receive their new card to activate it. If the card is not activated within 90 days, cardholders will need to request a replacement card before they can use their benefits. Current cards will expire 60 days after the new cards are issued. Old cards should be destroyed when the new card is activated.

The new cards will feature an updated design and enhanced security features. The cardholder's name and card number will appear on the back of the card, and an expiration date and 3-digit security code have been added for increased security. The expiration date applies to the card only and does not affect the cardholder's benefits. When using the new cards, cardholders should insert the chip or tap the card for payment instead of swiping it.

"This is the latest in a series of efforts to protect people's benefits. Chip cards will help reduce the risk of electronic theft, but we still urge cardholders to regularly check their balances, lock their cards when not in use, and use every tool at their disposal to protect their benefits," **said Division of Family Development Assistant Commissioner Natasha Johnson.**

Read more [HERE](#).



New Jersey Strengthens Oversight of Medicaid Home Care Services to Protect Program Integrity

New Jersey Human Services [announced](#) strengthened oversight requirements for Medicaid-funded Personal Care Assistance and Home Health Services, reinforcing the state's commitment to program integrity and responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

Beginning January 1, healthcare providers serving [NJ FamilyCare](#) members through Managed Care will be required to meet updated Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) standards. These requirements ensure that providers accurately verify document services and that Medicaid payments cover only services that providers actually deliver.

"New Jersey is committed to protecting the integrity of NJ FamilyCare and making sure every Medicaid dollar is used as intended to provide care to the people who need it," **Commissioner Stephen Cha said**. "Strengthening

Electronic Visit Verification gives us another important tool to ensure services are being delivered, properly documented, and appropriately paid for.”

“Program integrity is about accountability to our NJ FamilyCare members, to providers who follow the rules, and to New Jersey taxpayers,” **Deputy Commissioner Valerie Mielke said.** “These requirements are intended to strengthen the accuracy of Medicaid billing and create greater confidence that the services being paid for are the services being provided.”

“Strong program integrity protects everyone who depends on Medicaid, especially the individuals receiving care in their homes,” [Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services](#) **Greg Woods said.** “We want providers to succeed, and this implementation period gives them time to understand the requirements and make sure their systems and practices are ready. At the same time, we must have appropriate safeguards in place when Medicaid services are billed and paid.”

Read more [HERE](#).



**Commissioner Cha: Jersey's families will pay
the price for Washington's Medicaid cuts.**

Labor Day is a time to recognize the dignity of work and the people who keep our communities running. This year, it is also a reminder that when Washington makes decisions, working people are too often the ones forced to navigate the consequences.

Hundreds of thousands of New Jersey residents are suffering the consequences of decisions made hundreds of miles away in Washington, D.C.

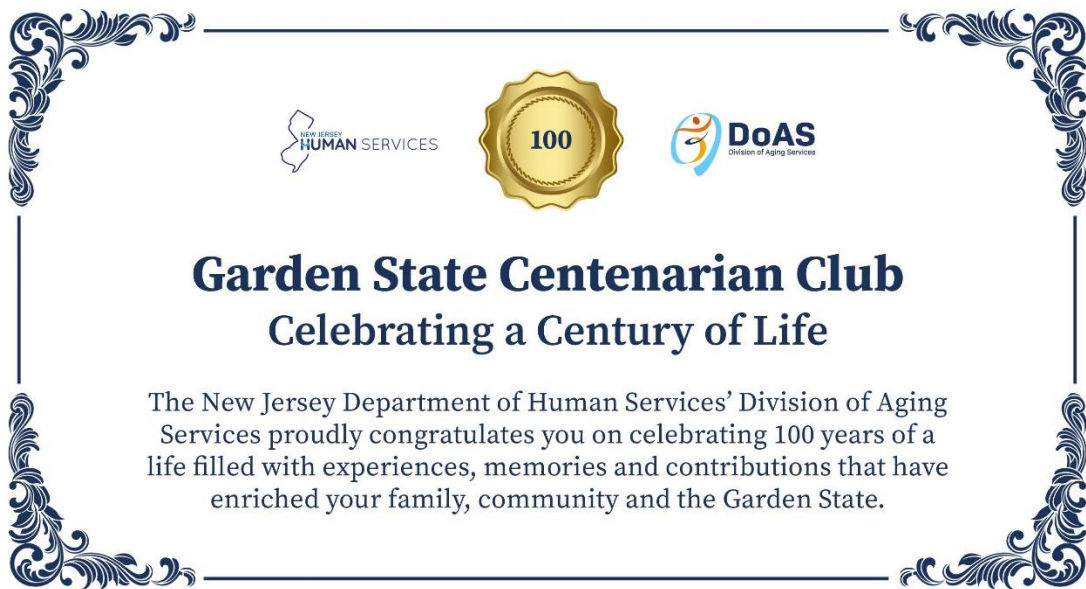
Some of our residents fled persecution and found refuge here. Others survived human trafficking or domestic violence. Still others came through humanitarian

programs after escaping war, violence, or other circumstances that have profoundly disrupted their lives.

They came to the United States seeking safety and inclusion. For years, federal policy recognized that people facing these circumstances deserved special consideration. Even as immigration policy changed, the federal government generally afforded refugees, people granted asylum, survivors of trafficking, and other vulnerable populations the dignity of access to health care. This access advanced the health of individual families and of our communities overall.

[That changes on October 1...](#)

Read Commissioner Cha's Sept. 7 op-ed published by nj.com [HERE](#).



Human Services Launches Centenarian Club to Celebrate New Jerseyans Who Have Reached 100th Birthday Milestone

New Jersey Human Services launched the Garden State Centenarian Club to celebrate the lives and contributions of New Jerseyans who are 100 years and older, and to highlight the programs and services made available by the Department to help older residents stay healthy, live independently, and remain in the community.

The club was launched during an event at the Carslake Community Center in Bordentown, in partnership with Burlington County officials and seniors participating in the county's congregate meal program. Edgewater Park resident Eddie Walker Hill, 105, became the club's first official member and was presented with a certificate of recognition as part of the festivities.

Attendees also included Human Services Assistant Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services Kaylee McGuire, Assembly Health Committee Chair Carol Murphy, Assembly Aging & Human Services Chair Shanique Speight, Assemblyman Balvir Singh, Bordentown Mayor Stephanie Lagos, Burlington County Department of Human Services Director Shirla Simpson, Burlington County Office on Aging Director Bryan Barnes and Burlington County Commissioner Randy Brolo.

"We are excited to launch this initiative to celebrate those New Jerseyans who have reached this remarkable milestone. It gives families and friends an opportunity to celebrate their loved ones and is also a great opportunity to highlight the programs and services available through our Division of Aging Services that promote health and independence," **said Human Services Commissioner Stephen Cha.**

New Jersey has about 1.7 million residents ages 65 years and older, representing roughly 18 percent of the state's population. According to the U.S.

Census Bureau's [Centenarians: 2020 report](#), New Jersey had 2,646 residents aged 100 and older in 2020.

"We are honored to recognize the lives and contributions of some of our oldest residents, and promote healthy aging and longevity. As New Jersey's older population continues to grow, we are focused on promoting healthy aging and advancing age-friendly efforts that help older New Jerseyans have the resources they need to remain healthy, independent, and connected to their communities," **said Deputy Commissioner McGuire.**

"Burlington County is proud to be home to a vibrant community of older residents, including several centenarians. Each of these residents have lived remarkable lives, and we are proud to be involved in the New Jersey Department of Human Services' recognition of them and their many contributions to our state and nation," **said Burlington County Commissioner Randy Brolo.** "We look forward to the Centenarian Club creating connections with more aging residents and their family members to ensure they know about state and county resources that might benefit them."

Anyone 100 years or older can join the Garden State Centenarian Club. Nominations can be submitted online using [this form](#) or by calling 1-877-222-3737. Individuals who call to submit their nominations will be connected with someone who can assist with enrollment. Individuals will be asked to share basic information and stories about their lives.

Centenarians will receive a certificate of recognition, and their stories will be shared on the Department's website and social media channels.

"A century is certainly worth celebrating, and I encourage anyone who knows someone who has reached their 100th birthday to submit a nomination. Reaching this milestone is a significant achievement, and recognizing those who have done so can help highlight the experiences of older New

Jerseyans,” said Division of Aging Services Assistant Commissioner
Louise Rush.

For more information about the club, visit [HERE](#).



National Centenarian Day

We were honored to celebrate Eddie Walker Hill, an Edgewater Park resident, WWII veteran, the first member of the Garden State Centenarian Club.

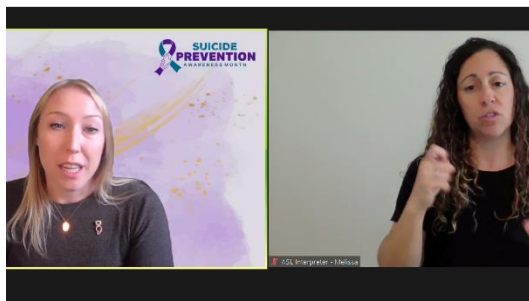
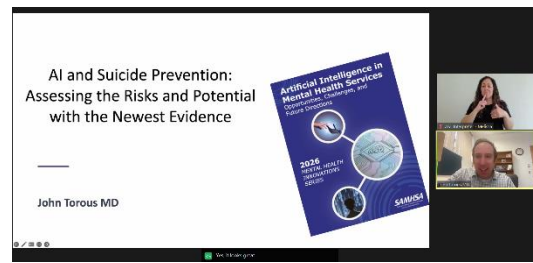
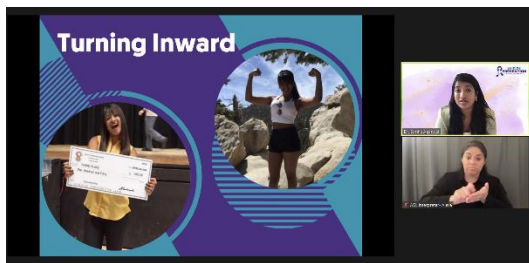
Mr. Hill served in both the U.S. Air Force and Army, including with the Black 1695th Engineer Combat Battalion in the European Theater during World War II. We are grateful for the opportunity to honor his remarkable life, service, and legacy.

Read more about Mr. Hill [HERE](#).



Thank you to everyone who joined our annual [Opioid Summit](#) on September 23rd for a meaningful day of learning, connection, and collaboration focused on prevention, treatment, recovery, and strengthening New Jersey's response to the opioid crisis.





New Jersey came together for the annual Suicide Prevention Conference to advance suicide prevention and mental health.

Thank you to Governor Mikie Sherrill and keynote speakers John Torous MD MBI, Dr. Sarika Agarwal and Mike Anestis, PhD for sharing expertise and helping reduce stigma and build hope.



New Jersey Human Services Honored for Two Addiction Services Promotional Campaigns

New Jersey Human Services won multiple awards from the NJ Ad Club for its [StayInThePic.nj.gov](https://www.stayinthepic.nj.gov) fentanyl awareness and [844-ReachNJ](https://www.844reachnj.org) addiction treatment promotional campaigns.

The StayInThePic campaign was recognized with first place in a Multimedia Campaign category and second place in the Digital Media Campaigns category.

The campaign also received Best of Category in Multimedia Campaigns and an Honorable Mention in the TV: Streaming or Online category.

The 844-ReachNJ also received an Honorable Mention in a Multimedia Campaigns category.

2. Summary of NJ RHTP Year One Activities

\$83M Amount of grant funding that has been awarded for activities across New Jersey

\$147M was awarded to New Jersey for RHTP Year One

103 Number of organizations competitively awarded grants

- Hospitals and health systems
- Federally Qualified Health Centers
- Behavioral health agencies
- Community-based organizations

134 Number of healthcare professionals who have applied to work in rural areas with a five-year service commitment from RHTP incentives

Example Year 1 grant programs

Programs financed during the first year of RHTP:

- Mobile Integrated Health program to improve continuity of care and reduce rehospitalizations
- Expansion of access to preventive services and care navigation using a care-partner led model
- Enhancement of rural health provider integrated Electronic Health Record (EHR) technology solutions

Source: New Jersey DCH

Logos: NJ HUMAN SERVICES, NJ Health, NEW JERSEY

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Watch the “**New Jersey Rural Health Transformation Program: Year Two Outlook**” webinar hosted by New Jersey Human Services and the Department of Health.

Learn more about the Program [HERE](#).



The [Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#) has partnered with the [Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority](#) to give individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing the opportunity to become trained doulas and enroll as an [NJ FamilyCare](#) provider.



Everyone deserves equal access to information and services. That's why New Jersey Human Services invests in [Communication and Language Access Grants](#) to expand access to health and social services for individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

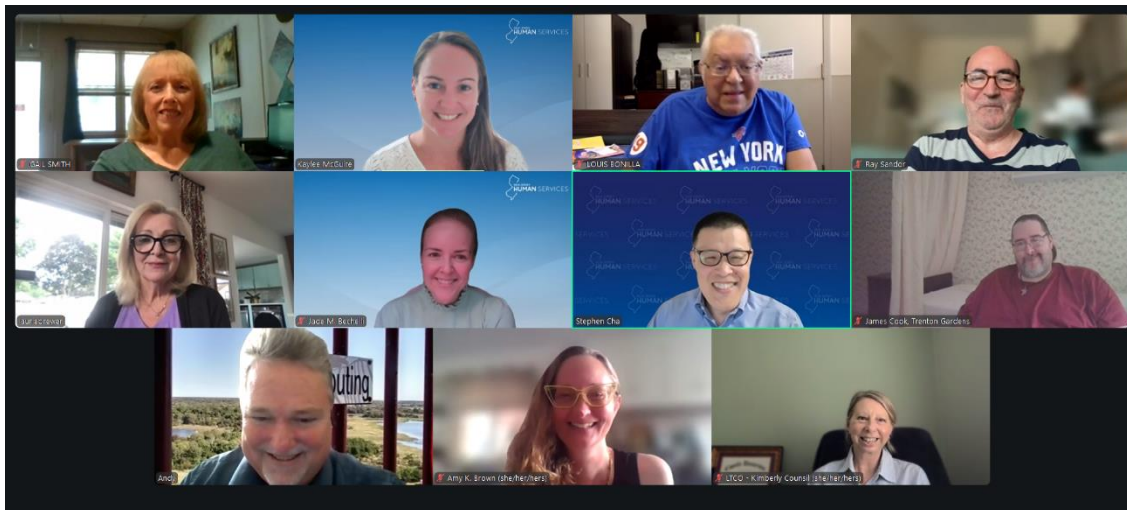


New Jersey Human Services has formed an advisory committee to strengthen access to responsive mental health services for New Jersey's Deaf and hard of hearing communities.



Commissioner Stephen Cha joined Health Commissioner Dr. Raynard E. Washington, Former Health Commissioner Dr. Kaitlan Baston, and Health's Executive Director of Substance Use Services Michele Calvo in a panel discussing the future of substance use services in the state on September 22, hosted by [RWJ Barnabas Health Care](#) and moderated by RWJ Barnabas Executive Vice President and Chief Corporate Affairs Officer George Helmy.

The event was held in celebration of the 10th anniversary of [RWJBarnabas Health's Peer Recovery Program](#), which embeds individuals with lived experience into care teams for hospitalized individuals with a substance use disorder.



Nursing home residents and advocates shared experiences, perspectives, and concerns directly with Commissioner Stephen Cha, Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services Kaylee McGuire and Chief of Staff Jade Bechelli, bringing ideas for policies to better support residents and strengthen care quality.



Deputy Commissioner for Social Services Michael J. Wilson joined Feeding Middlesex County for its annual Hunger Hero awards, honoring those who made a meaningful impact on food security.

If you need food assistance, visit njsnap.gov to learn more.





The [Division of Disability Services](#) hosted an art sale featuring artwork created and sold by individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities residing the [Division of Developmental Disabilities developmental centers](#).

The amazing artwork included paintings, handmade ornaments, door signs and more.



Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services Kaylee McGuire joined the NJ PACE Association to celebrate PACE's impact. PACE helps older adults age with dignity while staying healthier in their homes and connected to communities. Learn more [HERE](#).





Commissioner Stephen Cha helped [The Arc of New Jersey](#) celebrate **Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week** by presenting a proclamation from Governor Mikie Sherrill and sharing gratitude for their hard work serving individuals with IDD.





[SNAP is changing](#). New Jersey is getting ready. New Jersey Human Services brought stakeholders together to discuss major federal changes, share steps being taken, and hear from community partners about how we can keep eligible families informed and connected to the benefits they qualify for.



Commissioner Stephen Cha, Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services Kaylee McGuire, Assistant Commissioner Louise Rush, and [Division of Aging Services](#) staff met with the [NJ4A](#) to provide updates on services for older adults and reinforce the partnership with the 21 county Area Agencies on Aging. Learn more about how the state serves older adults [here](#).





The [Division of Disability Services](#) Interim Executive Director Jacqui Moskowitz participated in a tour of [Freehold Family Health Center](#) hosted by [Neighborhood Connections to Health](#) & [VNACJ Community Health Center](#). This event highlighted improvements to patient access made possible through the Inclusive Healthy Communities Grant Program.

**ARE YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW EXPERIENCING VISION
LOSS THAT AFFECTS THE ABILITY TO:**

Read prescription bottles? Travel safely? Work?
Maintain your home? Or care for yourself and your family?

**Join Us at Our Blindness Awareness Month 2026
Community Outreach Fair**

Thursday, October 8, 2026

1:00pm to 3:30pm

Cheesequake State Park

Hooks Creek Lake Pavilion

300 Gordon Rd., Matawan, NJ 07747

A Day Full of Information, Resources, Exhibits, Demonstrations, Fun
Activities, Food Trucks, Music, and MORE!



**For Further Information, email AskCBVI@dhs.nj.gov
or call 973-648-3333 or 1-877-685-8878 (toll-free).**



The [Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired](#) congratulates Frank Collepardi on negotiating another five-year contract to provide food service operations at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst. Collepardi has more than 50 years experience as a licensed Blind vendor in the Business Enterprise New Jersey (BENJ), including 17 years managing food service for the military. Prior to his work at the Joint Base, he managed food service operations at the United States Coast Guard Cape May Training Center.

Learn more about BENJ [HERE](#).



Chief of Staff Jade Bechelli swore-in new recruits Antonio Cardoso and Alex Rivera, Jr., whose father, Officer Alex Rivera, Sr., held the Bible for the oath, to the [NJ Human Services Police](#).

Congratulations and welcome to HSP!

HSP officers protect the people of the state with a focus on children, families, individuals with disabilities and special needs.



Please join us in congratulating Sergeant Marc Vitello, Northern Region;
Sergeant Neil Kurtiak, Central Region; and Sergeant Armond Viola, Central
Region, all of whom took the oath of office today as Sergeants with the
[NJ Human Services Police.](#)



The State House Dome and Drumthwacket were beautifully illuminated in purple for **988 Day**, a day of action to raise awareness about the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#). Remember that whatever you're facing, big or

small, your reason for seeking support is reason enough.

Call, text chat 988. 24/7



September 19th was **National Thank a Police Officer Day**. We recognized the [Human Services Police](#) for protecting children, families and people with disabilities. Thank you for your readiness, compassion, and commitment to Honor, Wisdom & Excellence.



Governor's September Proclamations



Suicide Prevention Week



National Addiction Professional Day



National Recovery Month



Direct Support Professional Recognition Week



988 Day



Falls Prevention Awareness Week



Deaf Awareness Month



National Centenarian Day



Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Awareness Day



September highlights both 988 Day and World Suicide Prevention Week.

A time to show up, speak up and
support those who may be
struggling. Know the three numbers:

9-8-8. Compassionate help.

Anytime. Anywhere.

For more information, visit [HERE](#).

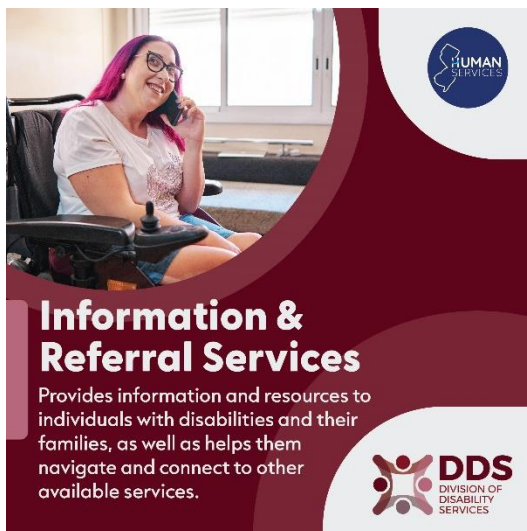
September was
National Recovery Month.
A time to educate people about
substance use disorders and
celebrate the gains made by those in
recovery. If you or someone you
know is struggling with addiction,
help is available!
☎ 844-ReachNJ ➡ ReachNJ.gov



September was
National Preparedness Month.
NJ residents with disabilities or
special needs should sign on to
Register Ready to make sure
responders can serve them in an
emergency.
For more info, visit [HERE](#).

September 14th-18th was **National Disability Voting Rights Week**, which aims to increase voter registration among individuals with disabilities to make sure their voices are heard.

Please visit [HERE](#) to learn about voter rights and accessibility.



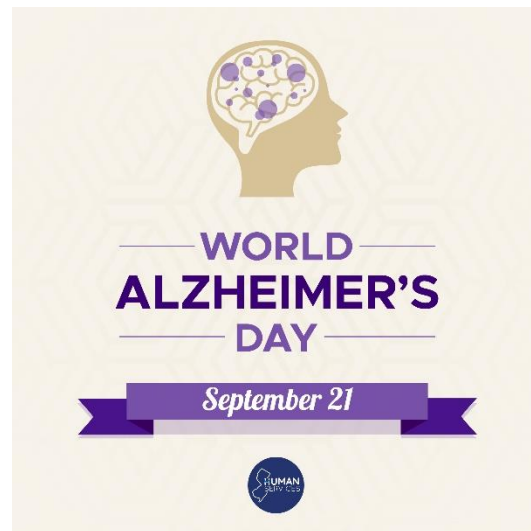
September was **Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Month**.

The [Division of Disability Services' Information and Referral Services](#) is a call center where you can ask about, and connect to, resources and supports for anything, including spinal cord injuries.

Visit [HERE](#) for more information.

September 21st was
World Alzheimer's Day.

New Jersey Human Services
Alzheimer's Adult Day Services
Program offers assistance, based on
the person's income, toward
attending one of the participating day
services centers. For more
information and to check eligibility,
visit [HERE](#).



NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

Are You Deaf or Hard of Hearing and Need Services?

-  **Mental Health Videophone Helpline:**
Call 973-870-0677
-  **Healthcare Resources:**
Visit nj.gov/humanservices/ddhh/education/healthcare/
-  **Information Regarding Sign Language Interpreters or Real-Time Captioning:**
Visit nj.gov/humanservices/ddhh/services/caption/
-  **Equipment Distribution Program:**
Visit nj.gov/humanservices/ddhh/services/edp/
-  **Hearing Aid Programs:**
Visit nj.gov/humanservices/ddhh/services/hearingaid/
-  **Language Instruction Services, Ages 0-5:**
Visit nj.gov/humanservices/ddhh/services/leveling/
-  **Deaf and Hard of Hearing Sensitivity Training:**
Visit nj.gov/humanservices/ddhh/education/dst/

For more information about our services, call 609-588-2648,
609-503-4862 vp, or email ddhh.communications2@dhs.nj.gov

September was
Deaf Awareness Month.

If you are deaf or hard of hearing
and looking for services, the Division
of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is
here to help. Get linked to these
services: Sign Language Interpreter
Hearing Aid Programs Emotional
Support and more.

Check out more information on
resources [HERE](#).

September 23rd was **International Day of Sign Languages!**

Early access to sign language and services is vital to the growth and development of a deaf individual. The Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing offers language acquisition services through an American Sign Language Deaf Language Associate.

More information [HERE](#).



[NJ SNAP](#) | [NJ FAMILYCARE](#) | [NJSAVE](#) | [NJ HELPS](#)

FOLLOW US!



