



State of New Jersey

NEW JERSEY MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH INNOVATION AUTHORITY
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NEW JERSEY MATERNAL CARE QUALITY COLLABORATIVE SPECIAL MEETING Minutes of the Meeting August 15, 2025

Minutes of the meeting of the New Jersey Maternal Care Quality Collaborative (“MCQC”) held virtually on Friday, August 15, 2025, at 10:00 AM Eastern Standard Time.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD IN ATTENDANCE

Ex-officio Members
Kelly Anderson-Thomas, representing Deputy Commissioner of Health Systems in the Department of Health
Novneet Sahu, M.D., representing Deputy Commissioner of Public Health Services in the Department of Health
Amanda Medina-Forrester, Director of the Office of Minority and Multicultural Health in the Department of Health
Shin-Yi Lin, Pd. D., representing Director of the Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services in the Department of Human Services
Elizabeth Harris, representing Director of the Division of Consumer Affairs in the Department of Law and Public Safety
Jordan Steiner, representing Director of the New Jersey Maternal Data Center in the Department of Health

Public Members
Cathleen Bennett, representing New Jersey Hospital Association
Adelisa Perez-Hudgins, representing New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute
Mary McTigue, representing Catholic HealthCare Partnership of New Jersey
Suzanne Sernal ¹ , representing Hospital Alliance of New Jersey
Dr. Tom Westover ¹ , representing New Jersey section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
Myriam Mondestin, M.D., representing New Jersey Medical Society
Shital Patel, M.D., representing Horizon Blue, the second of two medical directors of health plans in the State, as recommended to the commissioner by the President of the New Jersey Association of Health Plans

Liliana Morales, representing New Jersey Section of the Association of Women's Health Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Rahbbee Norton-Lee, representing New Jersey Affiliate of Planned Parenthood
Hetal Patel, M.D., representing New Jersey Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons
Marilyn Rivera-Cintron, representing New Jersey Primary Care Association
Mariekarl Vilceus-Talty, representing Partnership for Maternal and Child Health of Northern New Jersey
Robyn D'Oria, representing Central Jersey Family Health Consortium
Helen Hannigan, representing Southern New Jersey Perinatal Cooperative
Kimberly Birdsall, representing Health Coalition of Passaic County, number one of four existing Regional Health Hubs or any successor organization to that Regional Health Hub
Natasha Dravid ² , representing Camden Coalition, number two of four existing Regional Health Hubs or any successor organization to that Regional Health Hub
Nikki St. Germain, representing Greater Newark Healthcare Coalition, number three of four existing Regional Health Hubs or any successor organization to that Regional Health Hub
Cheryl Towns, representing Trenton Health Team, number four of four existing Regional Health Hubs or any successor organization to that Regional Health Hub
Nastassia Harris, RN, DNP, IBCLC, representing Perinatal Health Equity Initiative
Tonique Griffin, Public Member who is engaged in maternal health advocacy
Rose-Anne Uwague, Public Member who has personal experience in receiving perinatal services in one of the 10 New Jersey municipalities with the highest infant mortality rates in the State
Lisa Gittens-Williams, M.D., Public Member who has expertise in maternal or infant health workforce development or graduate health education
Erica Pulliam, Public Member who has expertise in behavioral health
Michelle Gabriel-Caldwell, Ph.D., Public Member who has expertise in providing doula services
Jaye Madden-Wilson ² , Public Member who is engaged in healthcare consumer advocacy

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES

Rachel Doobrajh, Assistant Attorney General, Department of Law & Public Safety, Division of Law

Michael Eleneski, Associate Counsel, Office of the Governor, Authorities Unit

Lauren Lalicon, Policy Director, Office of the First Lady

Eric Carlsson, Chief Financial Officer, NJ Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority

¹ Suzanne Sernal and Dr. Tom Westover were in attendance but experienced technical difficulties and were unable to respond during roll call.

² Natasha Dravid and Jaye-Madden-Wilson missed roll call but joined the meeting prior to the consideration of matters requiring action.

Laura Wilton, Chief of Corporate Governance, NJ Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority
Catherine Terrero, Executive Assistant, NJ Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority
Cindy Cortez, Administrative Assistant, NJ Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority
Myrna Rivera, Agency Management Analyst, NJ Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority
Pamela Taylor, Senior Advisor, NJ Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority
Sofia Bonsignore, Governor's Fellow, NJ Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority

Vice Chair Helen Hannigan presided over the meeting with Cindy Cortez keeping the minutes.

Vice Chair Hannigan called the meeting to order and announced that Maternal Care Quality Collaborative (MCQC) was in compliance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act and the adequate notice of the meeting had been provided in the manner prescribed by law.

Vice Chair Hannigan took roll call and welcomed representatives from the First Lady's Office, Governor's Authorities Unit, Office of the Attorney General, Department of Health, and the Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS).

Chair update

Vice Chair Hannigan addressed the Board and advised that the next MCQC meeting will be held on Friday, November 21, 2025, at 10:00 A.M.

Vice Chair Hannigan introduced Pamela Taylor, NJMIHIA Senior Advisor, who updated the Board on the Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center (MIHIC). Pamela informed the Board of the MIHIC's Groundbreaking in July, the Center's components, anchor tenants, building stack and NJMIHIA's community engagements efforts to advise the MIHIC's design.

Pamela also provided a high-level overview of the recommendations made by the five MCQC workgroups. The final recommendations per work group are as follows:

Clinical Best Practices: Continue or expand access for the Perinatal Mental Health First Aid program, which is geared towards clinical and non-clinical professionals.

Innovation: Provide capacity-building training for community-based organizations on partnerships and grant preparedness.

Perinatal Workforce: Expand Medicaid's training approval list to include additional doula training organizations.

Emerging Issues: Identify key patient education components and employ technology-based solutions to improve patient decision-making.

Health-Related Social Needs: Develop a community engagement toolkit, including an operational checklist, guidance on ensuring diverse representation and equal contribution, and recommendation for appropriate compensation structures.

Pamela reiterated that the MCQC serves as a strategic thought partner to the NJMIHIA Board, responsible for developing evidence-based recommendations aimed at improving maternal and infant health outcomes and reducing disparities. The NJMIHIA Board is tasked with reviewing, and taking into consideration the recommendations put forth by the MCQC. Using its authority, the NJMIHIA Board will explore how best to implement these recommendations through coordinated programs, funding initiatives, partnerships, workforce development efforts, and data-driven strategies.

Vice Chair Hannigan shared that NJMIHIA has engaged the Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) to support the development of its strategic plan. CHCS is a national nonprofit with 30+ years of experience advancing health equity and Medicaid innovation. Vice Chair Hannigan invited Kamala Allen, CHCS Vice President, to present to the Board.

Kamala Allen presented to the Board and provided a brief overview of CHCS's role in supporting NJMIHIA's strategic planning process. As NJMIHIA continues to evolve as a start-up entity, it also carries the responsibility of sustaining the mission of Nurture NJ. While there has already been significant activity and impact, CHCS underscored the importance of a structured strategic process, grounded in four key pillars: alignment, activation, accountability, and assessment of progress and impact. As a strategic partner, CHCS will provide organizational development support to ensure the successful execution of NJMIHIA's strategic plan. A critical component of this process will be the active engagement of MCQC members, whose perspectives and input will help shape the direction and success of the plan.

Vice Chair Hannigan then welcomed Carly Slutzky from the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), who shared an overview of NJDOH's strategic planning efforts and the role of the MCQC in that process. As a grantee of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Maternal Health Innovation Program, NJDOH is required to submit a draft strategic plan by September 29, 2025. To help inform this work, NJDOH will share the draft plan and a survey with NJMIHIA, which will be distributed to MCQC members for their feedback.

Matters Requiring Board Action

a. Approval of May 30, 2025, Minutes.

A motion to approve the meeting minutes was made by Public Member, Mariekarl Vilceus-Talty. Tonique Griffin, Public Member, seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. The motion carried.

b. Approval to Advance the MCQC Work Group Recommendations to the NJMIHIA Board.

A motion to approve the MCQC work group recommendations to the NJMIHIA Board was made by Public Member, Marilyn Cintron. Dr. Michelle Gabriel-Caldwell, Public Member, seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. The motion carried.

Executive Session

There was no Executive Session.

Other Business

Public member Rose Uwague commended the MCQC work groups and NJMIHIA for their remarkable speed and efficiency in developing the recommendations.

Dr. Shin-Yi Lin, representing Director of the Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services in the Department of Human Services, provided an update on the stakeholder engagement efforts of NJMIHIA and the DHS to expand the number of doula trainings recognized by New Jersey FamilyCare for community doula providers. She also shared a link to the July public meeting, where Assistant Commissioner and Medicaid Director Greg Woods gave a detailed update on the federal impacts on Medicaid.

Dr. Myriam Mondestin, Public member, raised a question about opportunities to make New Jersey the healthiest place for women, noting that overweight and obesity are major contributors to poor health and cardiovascular disease during pregnancy. In response, NJMIHIA Senior Advisor Pamela Taylor highlighted a range of opportunities and approaches, including NJMIHIA's collaboration with the Department of Labor to increase awareness of the paid family leave program, as well as the MIHIC's social and wraparound supports.

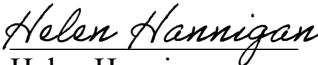
Public Comment

Tynisha Isom, a community-based doula with the Children's Home Society of NJ, asked about NJMIHIA's plans to educate women in urban Black communities, noting that many pregnancies are unplanned. Pamela Taylor, NJMIHIA Senior Advisor, responded that the NJMIHIA is working with Greater Mt. Zion, which is developing a birthing center across from the MIHIC, and is also exploring partnerships with Trenton Public Schools and other districts to increase awareness and share resources. Pamela encouraged Tynisha to share any recommendations she would like NJMIHIA to consider.

Adjournment

Vice Chair Hannigan requested a motion to adjourn. Public Member Cathleen Bennett made the motion to adjourn. Public Member Mary McTigue seconded the motion.

I hereby certify this to be a true and original copy of the August 15, 2025, New Jersey Maternal Care Quality Collaborative Special Meeting minutes.


Helen Hannigan
MCQC Vice Chair