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NEWSLETTER | JANUARY 2024



New Jersey Human Services Gave Out More than 132,000 Doses of Opioid Overdose Antidote During First Year of Free Naloxone at Pharmacy Program

Human Services Commissioner Sarah Adelman announced the Department issued more than 132,000 doses of the opioid overdose antidote naloxone during the first year of its program allowing residents to get the life-saving medication free and anonymously at participating New Jersey pharmacies.

Combined with other efforts, Human Services during the Murphy Administration has now provided about 614,000 naloxone doses to first responders, libraries, schools, colleges, public institutions, harm reduction entities and the general public, among others.

“Each dose of naloxone represents a second chance,” **Commissioner Adelman said**. “New Jerseyans obtained 132,000 doses through this program at community pharmacies, at no cost and with no associated stigma. As we work to eliminate barriers so that this life-saving medication can be available to every household, this nation-leading program will grant many more chances to save lives and more chances for recovery.”

“New Jerseyans can obtain this life-saving antidote for free and, importantly, without stigma,” **Deputy Commissioner for Health Services Lisa Asare said**. “We want naloxone in every New Jersey medicine cabinet, so I urge residents to continue visiting our participating pharmacies. You never know when you may need to save a life.”

“Naloxone saves lives, and is also an opportunity to give people a chance to treat the effects substance use disorder has on their lives,” **said Assistant Commissioner Valerie Mielke**, who oversees the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services. “Naloxone availability is a top priority of our ongoing work to reverse the tide of this epidemic. We hope to get even more naloxone into our communities in the year to come.”

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NJ Human Services Opens Communication Access Grants to Help Make Communities More Inclusive for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind Individuals

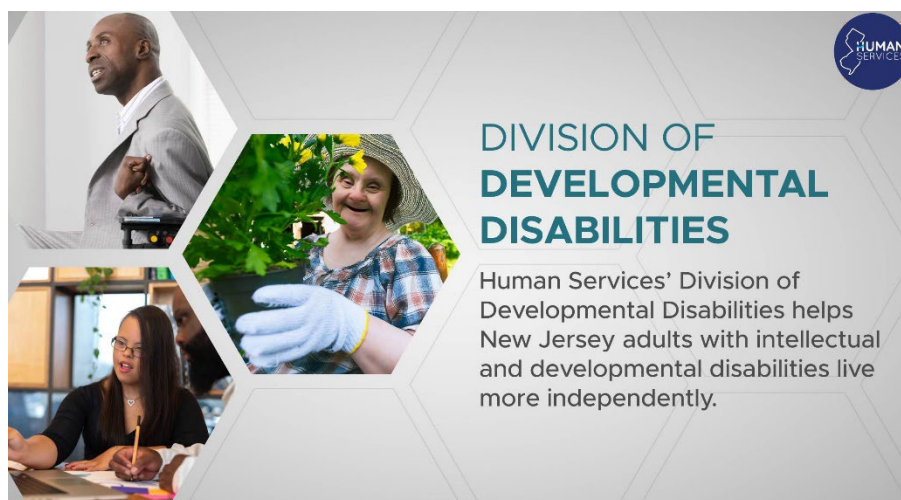
Human Services Commissioner Sarah Adelman announced New Jersey counties can now begin applying for grants to promote communication and language access for deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind residents of all ages.

“Improving communication access for deaf and hard of hearing New Jerseyans allows our friends, neighbors and family members to better participate in activities that so many of us take for granted. We are proud to open these funds for a second time to make even more communities welcoming and accessible,” **Commissioner Adelman said**. “We encourage counties to check their [eligibility and apply](#) for these grants and look forward to receiving creative and innovative letters of interest.”

The \$600,000 program will be funded through Human Services’ [Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#). Award amounts will vary and counties can receive a maximum award of \$70,000.

“Communication and language access allows for equal opportunity, enhances social connections, and helps break down societal barriers. This is especially true for deaf and hard of hearing New Jerseyans,” **Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Executive Director Elizabeth Hill said.** “These grants work to ensure all New Jerseyans reap these benefits and have autonomy in their lives. We look forward to creating a more equitable and diverse New Jersey through this initiative. “

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New Jersey Human Services Enhancing Emergency Services Programs for Individuals with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities

New Jersey Human Services is enhancing the statewide emergency services programs that support adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Commissioner Sarah Adelman announced the Department has awarded contracts to [Community Options, Inc.](#), [Community Access Unlimited](#) and [Oaks Integrated Care](#) to operate emergency capacity services (ECS) programs throughout the state. ECS programs support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), including those with acute behavioral needs who require immediate residential and day program support.

This funding enables emergency, short-term support to be available for admissions seven days per week, 365 days a year with 24-hour coverage provided.

“Our primary goal is to support individuals with I/DD who are in need of immediate services due to homelessness or other emergent circumstances,” **Commissioner Adelman said.** “As an example of the importance of these services, we’re requiring providers to accept admissions 24/7 and adhere to a strict ‘no reject’ policy, meaning that providers must accept every referral from the Department without exception. We’re continuing to focus on meeting the needs of all individuals and providing comprehensive and quality services, while helping individuals thrive in the communities in which they live.”

“Each program will have support from a board-certified behavior analyst to develop behavioral support strategies to address behaviors that require specialized attention,” **Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services Kaylee McGuire said.** “We are focused on finding ways to serve the needs of all individuals despite sometimes differing circumstances. As always, we want to help individuals live independently and successfully.”

“Individuals referred to this program will require varying levels of support,” **Division of Developmental Disabilities Assistant Commissioner Jonathan Seifried said.** “The providers will ensure a high level of staffing on each shift based on the needs of the individuals served, with the ability to facilitate a same-day admission as directed by the Division.”

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Governor Murphy Signs New Legislation



Governor Murphy Signs Legislation Establishing Sickle Cell Disease Pilot Program

Governor Phil Murphy has signed legislation (A4052) appropriating \$10,200,000 to establish a three-year sickle cell disease pilot program. Under the bill, the Department of Health (DOH), in consultation with the Department of Human Services, will establish a three-year sickle cell disease pilot program, under which DOH will select Federally Qualified Health Centers to develop and implement comprehensive sickle cell disease treatment programs and services.

“I am proud to sign legislation that will make meaningful steps toward removing barriers to care for people with sickle cell disease in New Jersey,” **said Governor Murphy**. “While sickle cell disease impacts people of all backgrounds, it disproportionately affects the Black community, which is why we must work to close health disparities across our state. This innovative and critical program has the potential to improve health outcomes for underserved populations while ensuring New Jerseyans with sickle cell disease can access the care that they deserve.”

“Providing coordinated care to individuals with sickle cell disease through Federally Qualified Health Centers is an investment in access, equity, and wellness for these New Jerseyans,” **said Sarah Adelman, Commissioner of Human Services**. “NJ FamilyCare covers more than 2,700 members who sought care for sickle cell disease, which can be a stigmatizing condition. Preventing hospital stays and acute crisis for sickle cell patients through this pilot will improve health outcomes and quality of life.”

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Governor Murphy Signs Immigrants’ Rights Legislation to Strengthen Workers’ Rights and Recognize the Diversity of New Jersey

Governor Phil Murphy has signed a series of immigrants’ rights bills to strengthen rights of domestic workers, promote language access to government services and benefits, and accurately understand the diversity of New Jersey’s communities, building on the Murphy Administration’s commitment to building a fairer and more inclusive state for all.

“In New Jersey, our greatest strength lies in our diversity,” **said Governor Murphy**. “These bills recognize that our state’s immigrant families and diverse communities enrich our cultural, social, and economic identity. I am proud to sign legislation that supports New Jerseyans in achieving the American Dream, accessing government services, and being appropriately represented in data and analytics that may inform our work.”

“Language barriers can make it very difficult for New Jersey’s immigrant communities to navigate government programs and access important information, services and worker protections as they make our state their home. The new laws signed by Governor Murphy today will break down these barriers and reinforce New Jersey’s commitment to supporting and building trust with the communities we serve. NJ Human Services is grateful to Governor Murphy and our legislative partners for the doors these new laws will open,” **said NJ Human Services’ Office of New Americans Director Johanna Calle**.

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Governor Murphy Signs Legislation to Expand Access to Crucial Harm Reduction Supplies

Governor Phil Murphy has signed legislation (S3957) to expand access to life-saving harm reduction supplies, building on the Administration’s commitment to ending the opioid epidemic through a comprehensive approach. Currently, harm reduction centers in New Jersey may distribute naloxone and other opioid antidotes, fentanyl test strips, and clean syringes. Under the bill signed by Governor Murphy today, they also will be permitted to distribute other harm reduction supplies, enabling them to provide a more comprehensive array of services.

The harm reduction supplies that will now be exempt from criminal penalty when provided by authorized harm reduction centers include any materials or equipment used to prevent death and physical harm, reduce the spread of disease, or mitigate the adverse effects associated with the personal use of controlled dangerous substances. Specifically, the bill clarifies the legality of products such as test strips for xylazine, a sedative for animals that has been increasingly present as an adulterant in the illicit drug supply.

“Harm reduction creates healthier communities while offering a compassionate environment for individuals with substance use disorders to access critical services,” **said Governor Murphy**. “Understanding that harm reduction supplies can prevent fatal overdose and transmission of disease, my Administration continues to include harm reduction as a cornerstone of our strategy to end New Jersey’s opioid epidemic. Through this legislation, we will ensure that Harm Reduction Centers in New Jersey can continue to offer a comprehensive array of services that help people with substance use disorders stay healthy and stay alive.”

“Harm reduction supplies like Naloxone are central to our ongoing efforts to prevent overdoses and save lives,” **said Human Services Commissioner Sarah Adelman**. “Harm reduction strategies reduce stigma and allow us to meet people where they are with no judgement. I thank Governor Murphy and the Legislature for this latest action, which supports our work to fight the opioid epidemic and help New Jerseyans struggling with addiction find their way to recovery.”

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Governor Murphy Signs Seabrooks-Washington Community-Led

Crisis Response Act

Governor Phil Murphy has signed into law [A-5326/S-4250](#), also known as the Seabrooks-Washington Community-Led Crisis Response Act. The bill establishes a Community Crisis Response Advisory Council, along with a companion community crisis response pilot program, and appropriates \$12 million to support grant recipients from six eligible counties of the pilot program — Camden, Essex, Hudson, Mercer, Middlesex, and Passaic — in addition to supporting the implementation of the bill by the Department of Law and Public Safety (LPS). The bill is named for Najee Seabrooks, who was killed in Paterson in March 2023, and Andrew Washington, who was killed in Jersey City in August 2023. Both were shot by police during mental health crises.

“I am honored to sign the Seabrooks-Washington Community-Led Crisis Response Act to help those suffering from mental health crises,” **said Governor Murphy**. “In times of need, we want to do everything we can to protect those in crisis and get them timely help and health. I'd also like to recognize the grassroots organizations that have been on the ground doing this work for years. Their work was the inspiration for several of our programs and their collaboration has helped us reach this point in our efforts.”

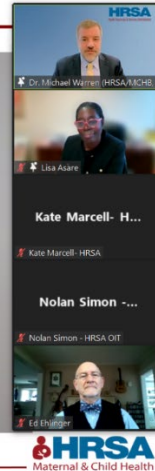
“Community crisis response to behavioral health incidents can help avoid escalation, and having professionals ready to respond to such incidents with resources and follow-up support can save lives,” **said Human Services Commissioner Sarah Adelman**. “I look forward to the work of the Advisory Council and its recommendations for best practices, while the pilot grant program will help shape community engagement and implementation. This will be another step forward in our ongoing work to reduce stigma and ensure

people get the mental health care they need.”

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MCHB DIRECTOR'S AWARD

Lisa Asare
MPH



HRSA
Maternal & Child Health



MCSB Director's Award

Congratulations to NJ Department of Human Services' Deputy Commissioner of Health Services Lisa Asare for receiving the Health Resources and Services Administration's 2023 Maternal and Child Health Bureau's Director's Award.

This award is presented annually to individuals who have made noteworthy national-level contributions to the health of infants, mothers, children, adolescents, and children with special healthcare needs.

The Department is committed to improving maternal health as part of [Tammy Murphy's #NurtureNJ](#) program.

Learn more about NurtureNJ [here](#).

TCNJ's Campaign for Language & Literacy Excellence Family Meet & Greet



TCNJ's Campaign for Language & Literacy Excellence hosted a Family Meet & Greet on January 27th at the Princeton Library. This event was held for families with children ages 0-5 who are deaf or hard of

hearing. During the storytelling session, the book "Snowmen at Night" was translated in ASL for the children.



Congrats to the [NJ Department of Human Services](#) Police - now a proud member of the [National Center for Missing & Exploited Children's](#) Missing Kids Readiness Program.

NCMEC developed the Missing Kids Readiness Program to promote best practices for responding to calls of missing, abducted, and sexually exploited children. Law Enforcement Agencies and 911 Call Centers are recognized for meeting essential training and policy elements and demonstrating preparedness for responding to a missing child incident.

To learn more about NCMEC's MKRP, visit: <https://bit.ly/493VBTD>

For a full listing of all MKRP-recognized agencies, go to: <https://bit.ly/47ND0u1>

Passaic Family Festival



NJ Human Services' Outreach Team
was happy to join First Lady Tammy Murphy at the
NurtureNJ Passaic Family Festival on January 27th.

DHS staff worked the resource table and spoke with festival guests about our division's programs and services.

For more information on NurtureNJ, click [here](#).



NJ FAMILY CARE
**365 Days of
Postpartum Coverage**
Visit *NJFamilyCare.org*



PLANFIRST

The Plan First Program administered by NJ FamilyCare provides a full range of family planning services to men and women who do not have access through insurance. Learn more at njfamilycare.org

NJFAMILYCARE



Doula coverage is part of NJFAMILYCARE

Doula care is associated with better birth outcomes.

For more information, visit www.njfamilycare.org

Maternal Health Awareness Day

The Murphy administration is committed to improving maternal health by implementing:

- 👩‍🦰 Familycare365 offers one year of post-partum coverage
- 👨‍👩‍👧 PlanFirst increases access to family planning services
- 👩‍🦱 Doula services for better birth outcomes

visit NJFamilycare.org for more information about these programs!



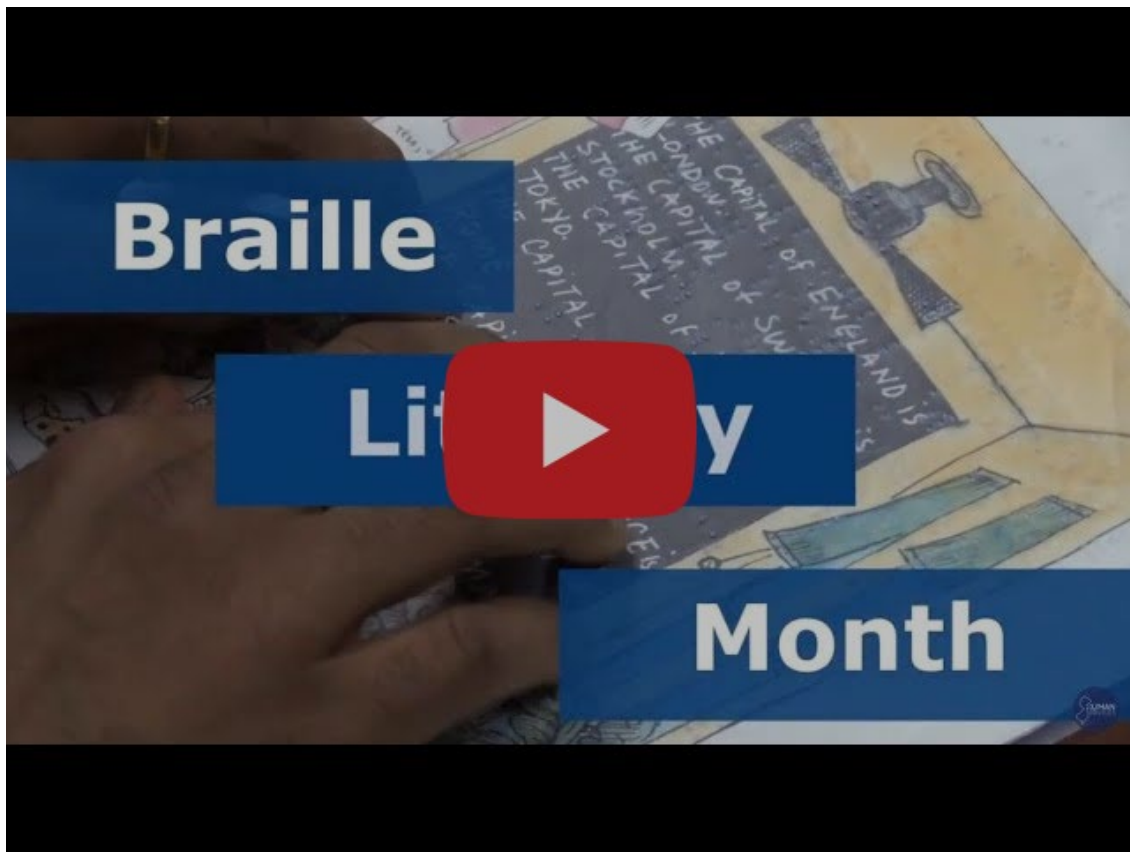
Law Enforcement Appreciation Day

On Law Enforcement Appreciation Day, NJ Human Services Commissioner

Sarah Adelman honors the New Jersey State Human Services Police:

"Their job requires special skills and talents that require the highest standards of integrity and trust, and they show those skills and talents

24/7."



Braille Literacy Month

Check out our video highlighting the importance and relevance of braille in literacy for people who are blind or visually impaired. The George F. Meyer Center, run by DHS' Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, provides accessible reading materials to more than 2,000 students in NJ.

**** For video with Audio Description visit: <https://youtu.be/OFxAzg9HOJs> ****

Caregiver Resources



Caregiver Resources

Caregivers provide dedicated support to individuals with disabilities, older adults and those who are chronically ill, often at great cost to themselves.

If you're a caregiver, please check out

<https://www.adrcnj.org/caregiver-resources> for helpful resources and supports.

The image is a video thumbnail for NJ FamilyCare Members. At the top, it says "NJ FAMILYCARE MEMBERS" in a colorful font. Below that, the text "TAKE IT ON. STAY COVERED." is displayed in large, bold, blue letters, with a red play button icon in the center. Underneath, it says "RETURN YOUR RENEWAL PACKET RIGHT AWAY! OR" in smaller blue text. At the bottom, there is a dark blue rounded rectangle containing the text "CALL 1-800-701-0710 (TTY: 711)" in white, followed by the "HUMAN SERVICES" logo.

Share your updated contact information with NJ FamilyCare by calling 1-800-701-0710 (TTY: 711).

 Watch for our mail.

 Reply on time.

 Visit nj.gov/staycoverednj to learn more.

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

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