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NEWSLETTER | OCTOBER 2023

Inclusive Healthy Communities - Making Nature Accessible

**NJ Departments of Human Services and Environmental
Protection Tour Recreational Area in Pinelands to
Spotlight Making Nature Accessible to All**



Commissioner Sarah Adelman and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection today highlighted the implementation of [Inclusive Healthy Communities](#) (IHC) grant funding through a tour and hike at the Atsion Recreation Area, which is part of Wharton State Forest in the heart of the Pinelands National Reserve.

Commissioner Adelman and DEP Assistant Commissioner of State Parks, Forests and Historic Sites John Cecil were accompanied by advocates for individuals with disabilities and organizations granted funding through IHC, including the [Pinelands Preservation Alliance](#) (PPA).

“It is wonderful to see public and private organizations partner to create equitable access to natural areas for New Jerseyans with disabilities as we witnessed at the Atsion Recreation Area,” Commissioner Adelman said. “Our goal is always to help our communities become more fully accessible to the wide array of individuals who we serve, and this is the latest example of those efforts. We thank the Department of Environmental Protection for their partnership and commitment to help us break down barriers to ensure individuals with disabilities can access the natural wonders of our state.”

“Having access to nature is a fundamental component of a healthy and happy life, and individuals with disabilities deserve equitable access to these benefits,” Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services Kaylee McGuire said. “The accessibility improvements made at the Atsion Recreation Area ensure that individuals with disabilities can also enjoy the many physical, mental and emotional benefits that nature offers.”

“The progress made at the Atsion Recreation Area is the beginning of substantial and sustainable change,” [Division of Disability Services](#) Executive Director Peri Nearon said. “Making nature more accessible and inclusive is a systems change, and well worth the effort for all residents of New Jersey. The changes being made ensure that spaces in nature are more accessible for everyone. The IHC program is making changes like this possible throughout our state.”

[Read more](#)





Inclusive Healthy Communities - Allies in Caring



The [Division of Disability Services' Inclusive Healthy Communities](#) grant program supports community organizations, municipalities, and counties throughout New Jersey to partner with the disability community to enhance accessibility, health, and equity.

One of our grantees is [Allies in Caring](#), which works to expand resources and opportunities for Deaf individuals by leveraging the talents of the Deaf community itself.

NJ Human Services & Labor Departments Highlight Efforts to Support Newly Arrived Migrants Eligible to Work in the United States



The state is investing \$2.5 million in federal funds to raise awareness about the work authorization application process and provide application support, and to help connect migrant arrivals to job opportunities and employers to migrant arrivals looking for work.

The New Jersey Department of Labor has set up a new [website](#) for newly arrived migrants interested in finding work and employers interested in hiring. The employee and employer portals can be accessed in English and Spanish from the landing page.

These efforts aim to amplify recent actions by the Biden Administration to assist newly arrived migrants authorized to lawfully work in the United States.

"We appreciate the Biden Administration's actions to remove barriers and provide legal pathways for New Americans to enter the workforce more quickly, so they can provide for themselves and their families," Human Services Commissioner Sarah Adelman said. "For many migrants, getting here is the beginning of their journey. Navigating the immigration

system can be daunting. We look forward to working with the New Jersey Department of Labor and other stakeholders to ensure newly arrived migrants in New Jersey have the information and support that they need to prosper and build their own American dreams."

[Read more](#)

NJ Disaster Mental Health Helpline

Conflict and uncertainty around the world can be overwhelming and frightening.

In need of emotional support?

You are not alone.

NJ Disaster Mental Health Helpline
877-294-HELP (4357)

8am to 8pm, 7 days a week

The NJ Disaster Mental Health Helpline provides information and referrals to support and services.



Blindness Awareness Month 2023



The [Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired](#) marked Blindness Awareness Month by hosting an outreach fair at Cheesequake State Park. The event featured information, resources, exhibits, demonstrations, activities, food trucks and music.



National Braille Week



National Braille Week raises awareness of the importance of braille and other alternative formats that open up the written world to people with vision impairment. The George F. Meyer Center, run by the [Commission for the Blind and Visually](#)

[Impaired](#), provides accessible reading materials to thousands of students throughout New Jersey.

White Cane Safety Day

WHITE CANE SAFETY DAY

OCTOBER 15TH

The White Cane symbolizes access and independence. It is a tool that makes it possible for people who are blind to achieve their life goals at school, work and in the community at large.



For individuals who are blind, the white cane is an essential tool that gives the ability to achieve a full and independent life. It allows individuals to move freely and safely from place to place - whether it's at work, at school, or neighborhoods.

World Sight Day



Project BEST
BETTER EYE-HEALTH SERVICES
AND TREATMENT

Provides free vision screening, eye health education and referrals for necessary services to children and adults.

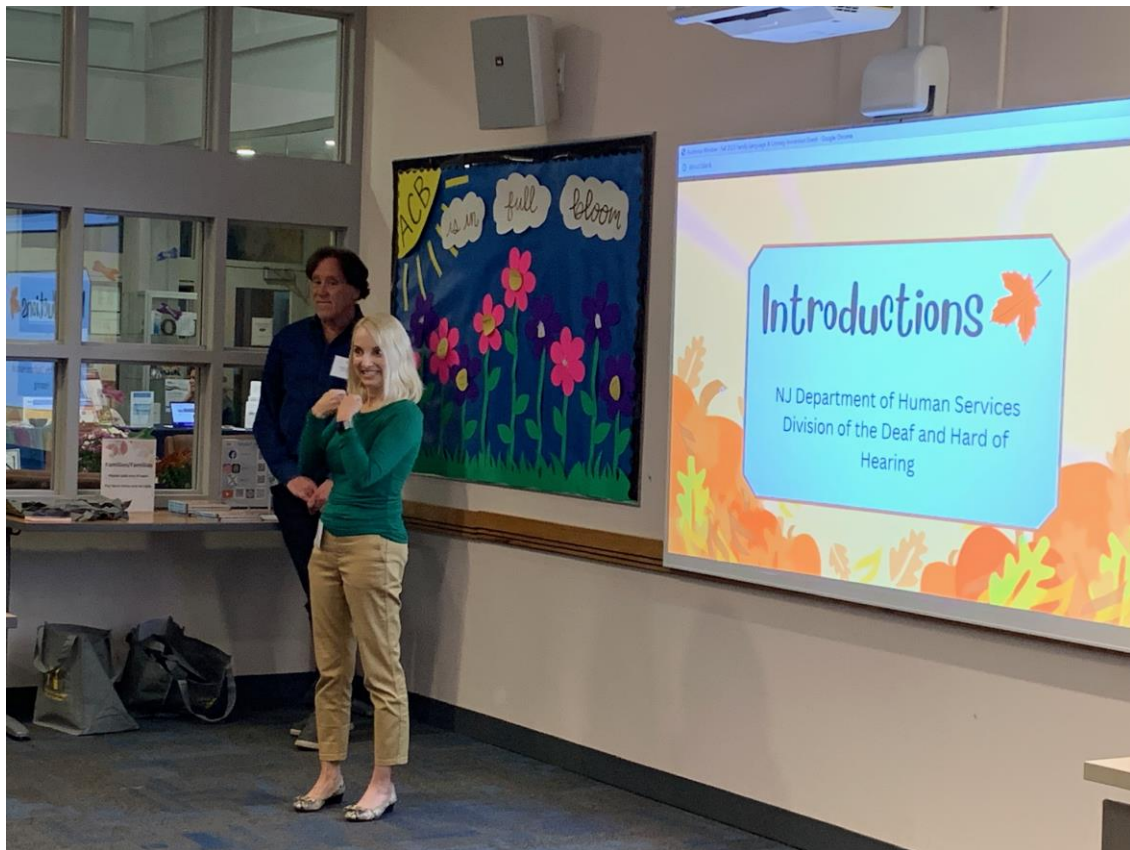
 **NJCBVI**
NEW JERSEY COMMISSION FOR
THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

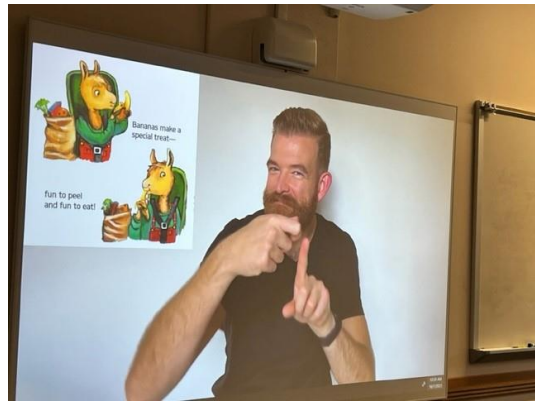
 **NJ**
Human
Services

World Sight Day is marked Oct. 12 to raise awareness and action for eye health and vision care. The [Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired's Project BEST](#) works to save

sight and restore vision. Services include: mobile eye examination unit; vision screening for preschool and school-age children; monthly or semi-monthly eye screenings; on-site screening at institutions and in communities; special diabetic detection and awareness programs; and other specialized eye screening programs. Visit [here](#) to learn more.

Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing - Fall Family Early Language & Literacy





The [Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#) joined with the [Campaign for Language & Literacy Excellence](#) to host the Fall Family Language & Literacy Event at The College of New Jersey. The event featured activities for Deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind children and their language models and families, lessons on reading stories to children in American Sign Language and information about services.

NJ Walk4Hearing



The [Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#) promoted its many services at the annual NJ Walk4Hearing.

**Mark Your Calendars:
2023 NJ Human Services Budget Listening
Session**



Human Services Virtual Budget Listening Session

Wednesday, November 29, 2023 | Noon

All are welcome to offer verbal or written testimony to inform the Department of Human Services budget for 2024-25.

To accommodate as many speakers as possible, verbal testimony is limited to 3 minutes.

Sign language and captioning will be provided. Please note any other accommodation requests when signing up.

The 2023 Human Services Virtual Budget Listening Session is scheduled for noon on Wednesday, November 29, All are welcome to offer verbal or written testimony to inform the Human Services budget for the 2024-25 state fiscal year.

To accommodate as many speakers as possible verbal testimony is limited to 3 minutes. Sign up [here](#) to testify.

Sign language and captioning will be provided, and please note any other accommodation requests when signing up.

Embracing Life: 988 and the Path to Hope



The [Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services](#) joined with the [Department of Health](#) and the [Department of Children and Families](#) to host New Jersey's 8th Annual Suicide Prevention Conference.

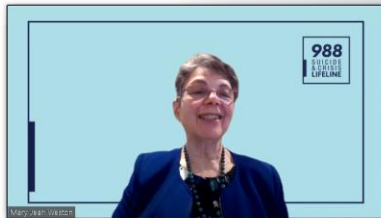
This year's theme was "Embracing Life: 988 and the Path to Hope."

The virtual conference featured panel discussions on [988](#), preventing firearm suicide, youth suicide prevention, resources available for first responders, the impact of climate

change on suicide, vulnerable populations, and assistance for service members and veterans. Dr. Clancy Martin's gave a keynote address focused on his personal experience as a survivor of multiple suicide attempts, with the goal of helping others understand suicidal thinking.

988's Guiding Principle

Anyone in crisis will always have
**Someone to call/text/chat,
someone to respond,
and somewhere safe to go**



New Jersey Department of Human Services

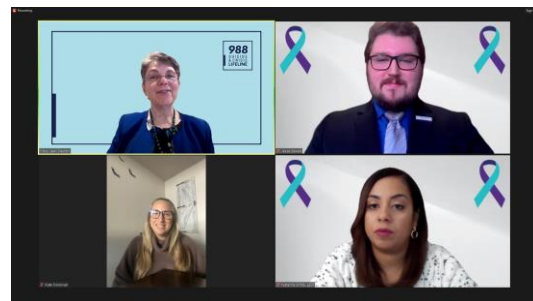
About the Presenter

Steve Colomando, MA, CMA, SCCC
Director of Training | New Jersey Department of Human Services
Division of Mental Health & Addiction Services | Disaster & Terrorism Branch

Specialized in emerging risks

- Bioterrorism
- Pandemic
- Climate Change

- 35-years experience as an emergency/disaster behavioral health clinician, responder & educator.
- Certified Threat Manager (CTM)** - Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP).
- Certified Master Trainer (CMT)** - U.S. Department of Homeland Security-National Threat Evaluation & Reporting (NTER) program.
- Agency Liaison/Cleared Partner** to FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF).
- Member**, Climate Psychology Alliance North America.
- Steering Committee Member**, ASIS International- Extremism & Political Instability Community (EPIC).
- Consultant and Trainer**, United Nations- Office for Operational Support-Special Situations Unit.





Fresh Match



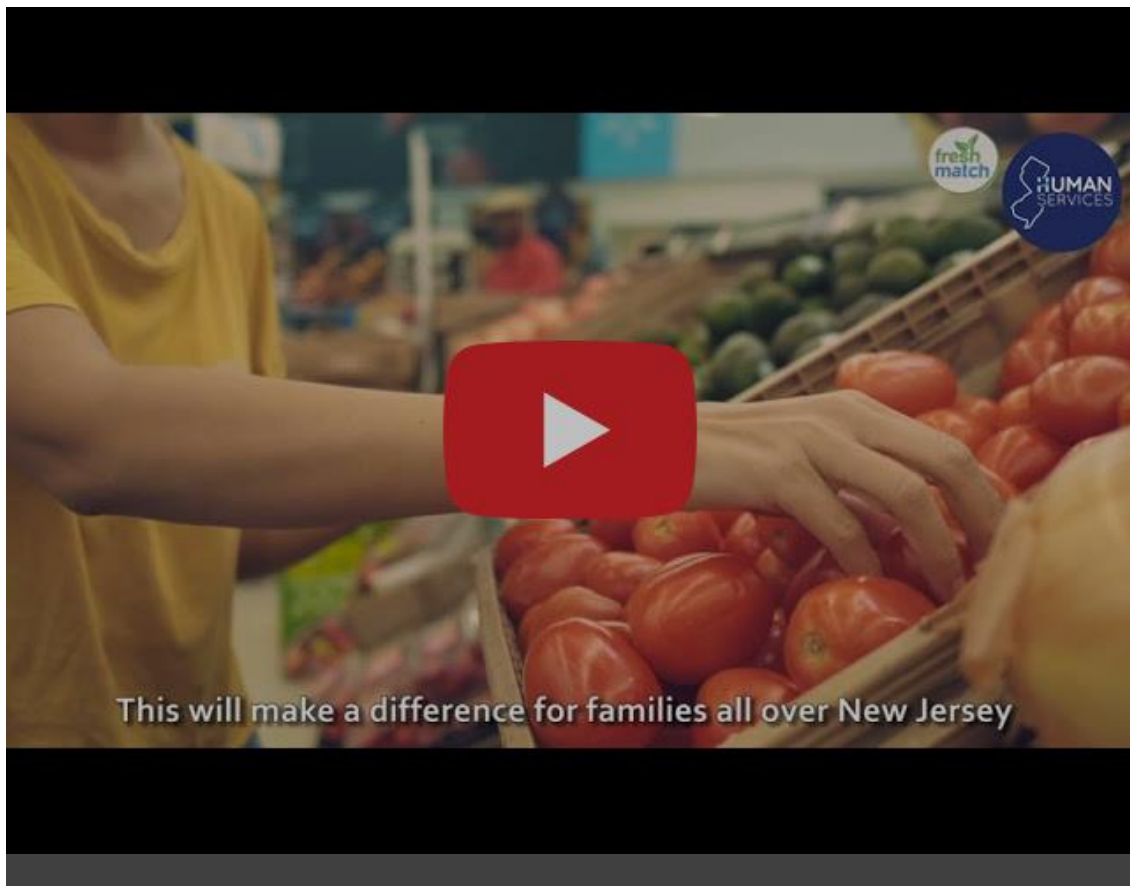
Commissioner Sarah Adelman joined [Hackensack Meridian Health](#) at the [Raritan Bay Area YMCA](#) in Perth Amboy to launch a new program called Fresh Match, which will make fresh produce more accessible to families in need.

Under the Fresh Match program, families receiving New Jersey's [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)](#) benefits can go into a participating grocery store and receive

a dollar-for-dollar match to buy fresh produce.

“Food and nutrition security is a basic and essential human need,” Commissioner Adelman said. “Expanding access to fresh, healthy foods will better power our state’s greatest asset: our people. We have partnered with Legislative leadership to expand the Minimum Benefit Program for SNAP recipients, and Governor Murphy’s Administration and NJ Human Services are proud to support innovative programs like this through the state budget.”

[Learn more](#)



Community Food Bank of New Jersey SNAP Navigator Van



Commissioner Sarah Adelman helped the [Community Food Bank of New Jersey](#) launch its SNAP navigator van, which serves as a mobile office when assisting with [SNAP](#) applications in underserved areas of South Jersey.

“The Community Food Bank of New Jersey is an outstanding community leader and partner to NJ Human Services and we are excited to see this funding used for a new

SNAP outreach van that will make food assistance more accessible to people throughout Southern New Jersey," Commissioner Adelman said. "This SNAP outreach van will help us reach and provide application assistance to more eligible families by meeting people where they are, which is particularly impactful in rural areas and communities with limited public transportation. Governor Murphy's Administration is intently focused on food and nutrition security for all residents, including by ensuring that everyone eligible for SNAP can sign up and will receive at least \$95 in monthly assistance to help with the cost of groceries. We know access to healthy and nutritious foods means a healthier New Jersey. This van will help us achieve that goal."





Brain Injury Awareness



A team from the [Division of Disability Services](#) braved the elements and joined the Brain Injury Awareness Walk hosted by the [Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey](#) in Bradley Beach.

NJ Health Care Quality Institute Discussion



Commissioner Adelman addressed the [New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute](#)'s Member Breakfast at Samaritan in Mount Laurel, providing an update on Human Services priorities and achievements. The Commissioner spoke to an audience of quality improvement experts, palliative care nurses, government relations officers, and health care leaders from across the state, and addressed budget investments and population health initiatives being enacted by Human Services.

The State of Healthcare



Commissioner Sarah Adelman joined health care leaders from across New Jersey at Rutgers University's Cook Campus to discuss public policy and legislative issues around healthcare delivery, including improving population health, access and coverage through Medicaid and other programs, improving value, addressing consumer issues and workforce shortages, and more.

The "State of Healthcare: Industry Leader's Perspectives" event was co-hosted by the [American College of Healthcare Executives of New Jersey](#) and Rutgers' [Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy](#).

Reducing Health Care Disparities



Deputy Commissioner of Health Services Lisa Asare joined the [Rutgers University's Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy](#) 71st Roy A. Bowers Pharmaceutical Conference to discuss Human Services' work to reduce health care disparities to achieve health equity and improve affordability and access, with a focus on First Lady Tammy Murphy's [efforts](#) to make New Jersey the safest and most equitable place in the nation to deliver and raise a baby.



**New Online Portal to Provides Access to
Reproductive Health Care Information**



Governor Phil Murphy signed legislation to launch a brand new website – the Reproductive Health Information Hub accessible at nj.gov/reproductivehealth – providing critical information on reproductive rights, access, and health care coverage across New Jersey.

The governor also highlighted forgivable loan awards for reproductive health care facility upgrades, the availability of funds for security upgrades, the recent implementation of a Medicaid rate increase for providers, and rollout of an initiative to grow the State's reproductive health care workforce.

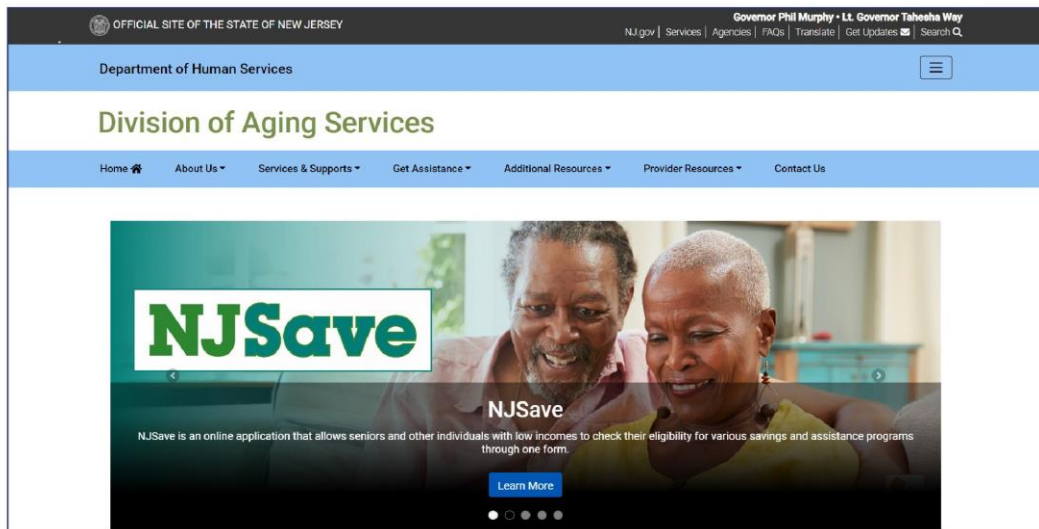
"While access to reproductive health care is being limited and even eliminated in states throughout our country, New Jersey not only continues to protect this crucial freedom but is also expanding access to reproductive health care," Governor Murphy said. "New Jersey's Reproductive Health Information Hub will serve as a one-stop shop or anyone seeking information on reproductive health care in our State – from access to the health care services they need to the rights we are working diligently to protect. Paired with our other efforts to improve health care facilities, increase reimbursement rates for providers, and grow the reproductive health care workforce, New Jersey has been and will remain a safe

haven for anyone seeking this care.”

"At a time when reproductive health care is under threat around the country, New Jersey continues to lead the way to expand access to reproductive health care, and protect women’s rights," Commissioner Sarah Adelman said. "Reproductive health care is an essential part of a person’s health and well-being. That is why the Department of Human Services is proud to have increased Medicaid rates for family planning services by \$10 million to ensure that women and families with low and moderate incomes have equal access to critical health care services. And this new reproductive health hub announced today will serve as another important resource for New Jersey families seeking information on reproductive rights, health coverage options and reproductive health care services available in the state."

[Read more](#)

Check out the new [Division of Aging Services Web Site](#)



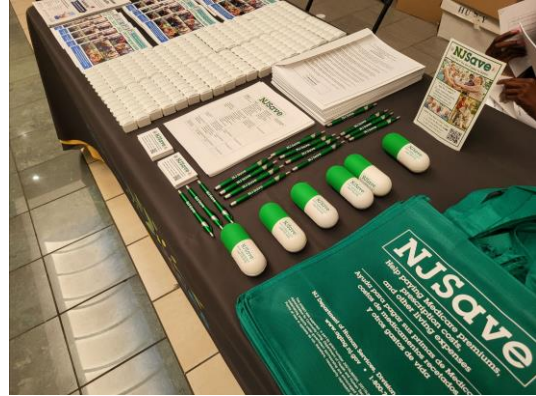
The Division of Aging Services website has a new, improved look! Visit aging.nj.gov to learn about the programs available to help older New Jerseyans stay connected, apply for & save on Medicare, prescriptions, and more.

International Day of Older Persons

A video thumbnail featuring a woman named Linda. She is wearing glasses and a denim jacket. The background includes a sign with the name "Linda" in red, a "HUMAN SERVICES" logo, and a framed picture of a vase of flowers. A large red play button is centered over the video frame.

Human Services marked International Day of Older Persons on Oct. 1 and [Ageism Awareness Day](#) on Oct. 7 by asking older New Jerseyans for their tips on how to stay healthy and happy, while making the most out of your life as you age.

Aging Services Outreach



The [Division of Aging Services](#) hit the road to meet older adults and highlight its services at the Camden County Senior Health Fair at Voorhees Town Center.

Disability Employment Awareness Month



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Proclamation

WHEREAS, it is estimated that approximately 26 percent of the United States' population has some type of disability, and that 23 percent (1.66 million people) or nearly 1 in 4 adult New Jersey residents have some type of disability; and

WHEREAS, people with disabilities are vital members of their communities and residents of our Great State; and

WHEREAS, October marks National Disability Employment Awareness Month; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey residents with disabilities represent a vibrant talent pool in our community and an under-tapped resource for our economy; and

WHEREAS, when people with disabilities thrive, their communities and our economy thrive, as these capable workers add value to businesses by contributing their knowledge, skills and abilities; and

WHEREAS, innovative and inclusive employers who are at the forefront of creating meaningful employment opportunities for people with disabilities should be recognized; and

WHEREAS, the contributions made by people with disabilities in all occupations, across all industries, throughout the state should be celebrated; and

WHEREAS, creating awareness and training opportunities that support a fully integrated workforce in New Jersey with a wide array of abilities is a necessary endeavor; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Human Services through its Division of Developmental Disabilities, Division of Disability Services, Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired works daily to empower individuals with disabilities to be positioned to successfully enter the workforce through training, advocacy, education, vocational rehabilitation and language access;

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

OCTOBER 2023

AS

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

in New Jersey and urge all employers to support efforts to provide opportunities to individuals with disabilities, make their workplaces more inclusive and welcoming, and acknowledge the contributions of people with disabilities to the workforce and to our state's economy.



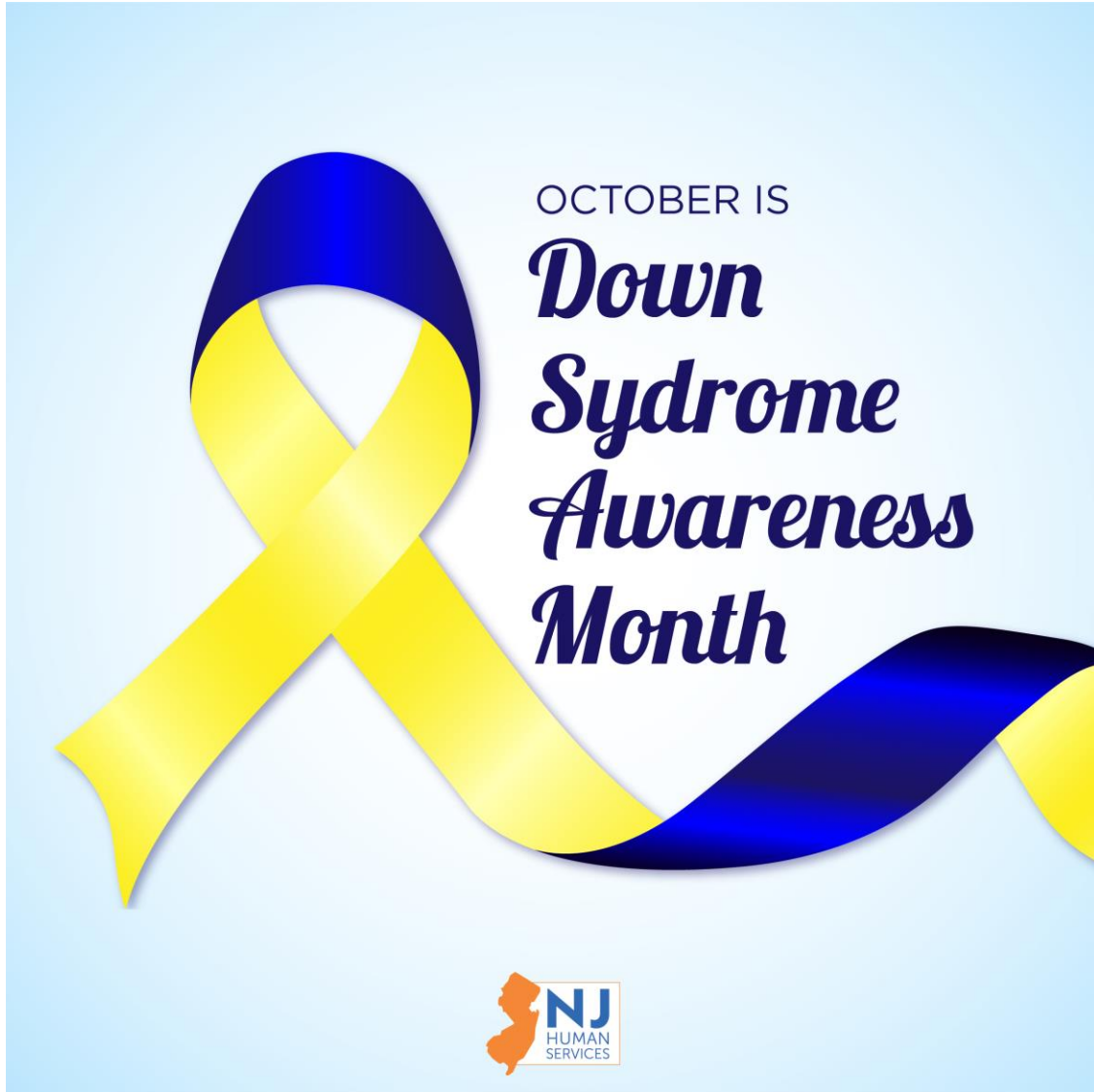

Lt. GOVERNOR

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


GOVERNOR

Observed each October, National Disability Employment Awareness Month celebrates the contributions of America's workers with disabilities past and present and showcases supportive, inclusive employment policies and practices that benefit employers and employees. This year's theme was "Advancing Access and Equity" to mark the 50th anniversary of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Down Syndrome Awareness Month



Down Syndrome Awareness Month celebrates the many abilities of individuals with Down syndrome and aims to break down barriers and focus on promoting advocacy for people with Down syndrome.

Welcoming & Supporting New Americans



Commissioner Sarah Adelman and [Office of New Americans](#) Executive Director Johanna Calle joined a bipartisan group of leaders at the White House to discuss the need to work together to welcome and support New Americans.

"Strong state and federal coordination is essential for our newest residents to work toward the American Dream,' Commissioner Adelman [stated](#).

**Mental Health Awareness Week & World Mental
Health Day**

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
9-8-8

NJMentalHealthCares Helpline
1-866-202-HELP

**ACCESS American Sign Language and
Videophone Helpline**
973-870-0677

Assistance and Referrals to Addiction Treatment
1-844-ReachNJ

NJ Disaster Mental Health Helpline
877-294-HELP



Human Services marked Mental Health Awareness Week from Oct. 1-7 and World Mental Health day on Oct. 10 by highlighting its mental health help lines to continue to raise

awareness about mental health and provide support and treatment options for mental health conditions.

Child Health Day

NJ FAMILY CARE | Cover All Kids



NJ Covers All Kids!

All children can apply for NJ FamilyCare,
regardless of their immigration status.



Human Services marked Child Health Day on Oct. 2 by highlighting how New Jersey "Covers All Kids" through [NJ FamilyCare](#). All children can apply for NJ FamilyCare regardless of their immigration status. Visit [here](#) to learn more.

National Prescription Drug Take Back Day

**"I don't
know where
to begin."**

Call 844-ReachNJ
Addiction Help. Always Here. Always Live.



ReachNJ.gov

National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, marked Oct. 28, aims to provide a safe, convenient, and responsible means of disposing of prescription drugs, while also educating the general public about the potential for abuse of medications. Visit [here](#) for New Jersey's Project Medicine Drop sites.



Commissioner Adelman Honored



Commissioner Sarah Adelman was honored by the New Jersey Coalition of Latino Pastors and Ministers for her efforts to assist the people of New Jersey. The Commissioner was honored at event in which the Coalition signed a cooperative agreement with Hudson Regional Hospital.

"My heartfelt gratitude to Rev. Flores and Ruiz and the Latino Pastors Coalition for this recognition & for being incredible partners to Human Services and trusted community leaders for those we serve," Commissioner Adelman [stated](#).

Emergency Readiness Training



Human Services' Office of Emergency Management continues providing treatment throughout the state.

Above, the team coordinated with the American Red Cross on training the state's Functional Assessment Service Team on conducting assessments of emergency shelters and requesting resources to support individuals with disabilities.

And, below, it provided shelter field guide training to Middlesex County team members.



Breast Cancer Awareness Month















Staff from throughout Human Services wore pink and walked to raise awareness as part of Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

"We walked for hope, and stood in tribute to the strength of our colleagues, friends and loved ones who have been impacted by this disease," Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services Kaylee McGuire [stated](#).

SPOTLIGHTS ON NJ HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS

A Message in American Sign Language about [StopOverdoses.NJ.Gov](https://stopoverdoses.nj.gov)



A message in American Sign Language from [Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#) Executive Director Elizabeth Hill on how to get free and anonymous life-saving naloxone at participating New Jersey pharmacies. Visit stopoverdoses.nj.gov to learn more.

NJ FAMILY CARE MEMBERS

**CHECK
FOR
YOUR
RENEWAL
PACKET!**



NJ SNAP recipients can use their EBT card for online grocery shopping

Use your Families First EBT card to use NJSNAP to order groceries online from participating retailers.

For a list of participating retailers, visit www.nj.gov/humanservices/njsnap/benefits/.



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

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