



In the Community

July-September, 2019
Volume 1, Issue 5



Commissioner's Welcome

Summer in New Jersey means beaches, boardwalks and enjoying the outdoors, so we took to the water for one of our most exciting announcements this summer.

On July 4th, NJ Human Services joined Governor Murphy on the Battleship New Jersey to welcome new citizens to our country and to announce new plans to support immigrant and refugee integration in New Jersey. As **Governor Murphy noted**, "While the federal government takes action that prevents immigrants from seeking the American Dream, New Jersey will fight for our brothers and sisters and stand against the hatred and bigotry coming from Washington."

We continued our tireless fight against the opioid epidemic, convening our first opioid summit to focus on our work to encourage the adoption of medication-assisted treatment as the gold standard for combating this epidemic. We were pleased to join with the NJ Department of Corrections and wardens from across our county jail system in launching a new initiative to improve addiction treatment for those involved with the criminal justice system.

We also were particularly excited to announce a new \$54 million investment in child care to better support New Jersey's families. We are making child care a priority, given its central role in supporting working families and the importance of quality care in early childhood development. As **First Lady Tammy Murphy said**, "Investing in child care is a critical component to reducing maternal and infant mortality as well as a commitment to New Jersey families, gender equality, and the general well-being of our children."

In addition, we implemented a new 20 percent increase for families and individuals who need assistance with basic necessities. All of these efforts are driven by our commitment in the Murphy Administration to helping New Jersey families get on the strongest possible financial footing.



With advocates across the State, we were excited to join Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver as she signed several laws to help deaf, deafblind and hard-of-hearing individuals. Access to early intervention supports and ongoing services throughout the lives of children who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, and deaf-blind can make a significant difference by developing strong language and literacy skills that will help them succeed.

We look forward to continuing to work with each of you on our shared goals of helping New Jerseyans and their families to thrive.

Carole Johnson
NJ Human Services Commissioner

What's Inside



Commissioner's Welcome	1
Opioid Summit	2
Naloxone & Homeless Shelters	3
\$54M Investment in Child Care	4
Developmental Disabilities	5
Overdose Awareness	6
New Medicaid Director	6
Immigrant Integration	7
Americans with Disabilities Act	8
Suicide Prevention Conference	9
Supporting NJ Families	10
Paralympics Athlete	10
Health Exchange	11
Students Awarded Scholarships	11
Free or Discounted Admission	12
Program Spotlight	13
Deaf & Hard of Hearing Action	14
MAT Training	14
Protect Older New Jerseyans	15
Town Hall Opioid Crisis	15
Snapshots	16
Community Voices	21
In the News	24





At Human Services Opioid Summit, State Unveils \$8M Commitment to Help County Jails Treat Opioid Addiction



*Corrections Acting Commissioner Hicks
and Human Services Commissioner Johnson unveil \$8M plan
to treat opioid addiction in county jails*

NJ Human Services Opioid Summit 2019 in Atlantic City featured an important announcement - the Murphy Administration will spend \$8 million to partner with county jails to provide medication-assisted treatment (MAT) to individuals with opioid addiction who are justice-involved.

The Administration has identified an urgent need for action to reduce opioid overdose among the justice-involved population, given the tremendous risk for overdose post-release. Studies have suggested the risk for opioid overdose deaths for people shortly after leaving jail is as much as 129 times that of the general population. The initiative will focus on the use of MAT for opioid addiction, which is the clinical standard of care for opioid use disorder, both in jail and post-release.

Human Services and the Department of Corrections, in collaboration with the Department of Health, are making funding available to county correctional facilities to provide MAT to individuals with opioid addiction who are in county jails. The funding will also create the critical community partnerships that will ensure treatment continues post-release.

"As the opioid epidemic continues to devastate communities across the state, our administration is committed to providing critical treatment, such as MAT, for individuals struggling with opioid addiction," said Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver. "This critical investment is another major step in New Jersey's effort to take bold and aggressive action in order to combat this crisis and help individuals on the road to recovery."

"Individuals leaving jail are particularly vulnerable to opioid overdose," **Human Services Commissioner Carole Johnson said**. "It is imperative that we treat people with opioid use disorder with the clinical standard of care before they are released and maintain treatment after they leave jail. We are pleased that the county wardens are partnering with us in this critical effort to provide MAT in county jails and post-release. We look forward to working together with them to turn the tide of this epidemic."

This initiative builds on New Jersey's prison MAT program, where Human Services and the Department of Corrections partner to bring addiction treatment into State prisons. The collaboration is providing peer services that expand pre- and post-release recovery support services to individuals within the Department of Corrections with an opioid use disorder or other



The crowd at the Atlantic City Convention Center

substance use disorder, and facilitates continuity of care and treatment that includes comprehensive medical, substance use treatment and social services.

"There is a paradigm shift in the treatment of incarcerated individuals with substance use disorders," said **Department of Corrections Acting Commissioner Marcus O. Hicks, Esq.** "With clinically proven medication-assisted treatment and a continuum of services post-release, this initiative offers sustainable solutions to address addiction issues plaguing people in our state's criminal justice system - reducing recidivism rates, and enhancing public safety while expanding services to those who can truly benefit from this treatment."

"At the end of the day, we need to save lives. These continued next page



Left to right, Erin Zerbo, MD, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Associate Director of Medical Student Education in Psychiatry, Rutgers; Dheeraj Raina, MD, Medical Director for SUD initiatives, Anthem Health Insurance; Kaitlan Baston, MD, Medical Director for Addiction Medicine, Cooper's Urban Health Institute; Human Services Commissioner Carole Johnson; Lilo Stainton, NJSpotlight





Human Services Opioid Summit continued



*Sam Quinones,
journalist
and author of
Dreamland*

medications save lives," said **Department of Health Acting Commissioner Judith Persichilli**. "Individuals who take them are less likely to die from overdose or other addiction-related causes, less likely to inject drugs or transmit or contract infectious diseases, and more likely to stay in treatment longer and enjoy better long-term outcomes."

A pilot program in Atlantic County supported by the Departments of Human Services and Corrections is already providing medication-assisted treatment to individuals in the Atlantic County Jail with opioid use disorder and connecting them to treatment post-release. The county jail partners with the John Brooks Recovery Center on this initiative.

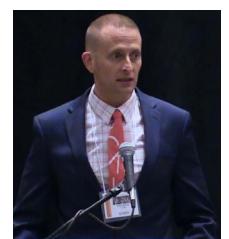
"We are extremely thankful and grateful for this opportunity to receive this \$8 million commitment to assist our addicted inmate population in need of MAT services," said **Gloucester County Warden Eugene Caldwell, president of the New Jersey County Jail Association**. "Each county jail will now



Left to right, Dr. Rachel Haroz of Cooper Medical School at Rowan; Atlantic County Deputy Warden Michael Kelly; Camden County Warden Karen Taylor; Gloucester County Warden Eugene Caldwell; former Gov. Jim McGreevey of New Jersey Reentry Corp.; Acting Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli; Acting Corrections Commissioner Marcus Hicks; and Human Services Commissioner Carole Johnson

be able to provide this much-needed service as part of the change in our day-to-day responsibilities, as we now envision ourselves as a Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. All of today's success would not have happened if it wasn't for the working relationships and partnerships between the Wardens Association, NJDOC, NJDHS and the NJDOH along with the dedication each agency has provided to achieve this amazing investment. Each county jail can make a difference but together with this partnership, we can make a change in someone's life."

The announcement was part of a day-long NJ Human Services-sponsored summit on the opioid epidemic held at the Atlantic City Convention Center, where nearly 500 health care providers gathered to share best practices in treating opioid use disorder. The theme of the summit was, "Saving Lives & Changing Perceptions: Medication-Assisted Treatment."



*Adam Bucon of the
Division of Mental Health
and Addiction Services*



Left to right, Mike Santillo of John Brooks Recovery Center; Judge Mark Sandson of Atlantic County Recovery Court; John Power of Power's Pharmacy; Patty McCarthy of Faces and Voices of Recovery; Monica Maycott and Charlene Maycott of City of Angels; Kim Govak of Center for Family Services; and Assistant Commissioner Valerie Mielke

NJ Human Services Provides Opioid Overdose Antidote to Homeless Shelters

NJ Human Services is delivering the opioid overdose antidote naloxone for free to participating shelters serving the homeless as part of the Department's ongoing efforts to get naloxone into as many hands as possible to help save lives.

"Nearly 1,200 doses of the nasal spray form of naloxone are being delivered to homeless shelters across the State to put this lifesaving tool in the hands of staff who can help save lives from overdose," **Commissioner Johnson** said.

The shelter initiative comes on the heels of the Department's June 18 giveaway of 32,000 doses of free naloxone at 174 participating pharmacies throughout the state. It was considered the largest one-day free distribution in the country.

"Our goal is to save lives. We are doing everything we can to give this life-saving antidote to as many people as possible," **Commissioner Johnson** said. "We need all of the help we can get in fighting this deadly epidemic. New Jerseyans responded in overwhelming numbers to the June naloxone giveaway, sending a message that, when given the chance, they want to save lives. This is another opportunity to help turn the tide of the opioid epidemic."

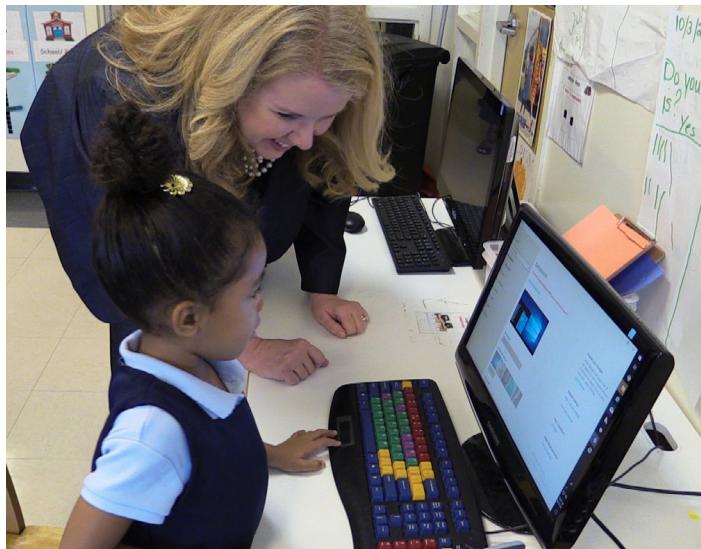
Currently, 36 shelters throughout the state are participating in the distribution. Human Services expects more participants as the program continues.

"We are grateful to the participating shelters for their willingness to play such a vital role in this fight," said **Assistant Commissioner for the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services Valerie Mielke**. "They are on the front lines, so we can certainly use their help."





Murphy Administration Announces \$54 Million Investment in Child Care



First Lady Tammy Murphy and Commissioner Johnson announced that families throughout the state who receive support from New Jersey's child care subsidy program will see \$54 million in increased funding as part of the Murphy Administration's continued effort to help working families in New Jersey.

Subsidies will increase by as much as 10 percent, depending on the age of the child, and will be implemented in two phases, with the first installment having occurred in September and the second coming in January. Added funding is available to support and incentivize quality improvement among child care providers.

"A mother should never have to choose between paying her rent and keeping her

working families of quality care in early childhood development. The announcement builds on the 2018 Murphy Administration investment of \$30 million to increase rates for child care – the first substantial increase in child care center rates in nearly a decade.

Altogether, support for infant care will have increased by nearly 40 percent under the Murphy Administration – from about \$724 a month to \$994 by January 1. For parents who select an infant care provider with a three-star quality rating from our Grow NJ Kids quality improvement program, that rate will have jumped even further, reaching \$1,093.

"Quality, affordable child care is what working families want and need to succeed

baby in quality child care," said First Lady Murphy. "Investing in child care is a critical component to reducing maternal and infant mortality as well as a commitment to New Jersey families, gender equality, and the general well-being of our children."

The Murphy Administration is making child care a priority given its central role in supporting

in New Jersey," Commissioner Johnson said. "The Murphy Administration is making child care a priority because we know that it is hard to be successful at work or in school if you don't have confidence that your children are getting the care they need. We owe it to our families who are striving every day to get on the best possible financial footing to give them the peace of mind that comes from quality child care. Plus, investing in child care simply makes good economic sense to help continue to build and support our state's workforce, attract new businesses, and grow our economy."

"This latest investment in families, children and child care providers is critical to our state," Deputy Commissioner Elisa Neira said. "The Murphy Administration is dedicated to increasing access to affordable child care for New Jersey families so they can get the child care they need while they work or attend school or training."

"Children who are in quality early learning programs when they are young are better prepared with better reading and math skills," said Natasha Johnson, Assistant Commissioner for Human Services' Division of Family Development. "Grow NJ Kids is helping New Jersey's child care providers enhance program quality, and these new investments in quality further reward their success."





Wages Increase for Direct Support Professionals



NJ Human Services Assistant Commissioner Jonathan Seifried presents the Governor's proclamation to the ARC of Camden County's Direct Support Professionals

Commissioner Johnson recently announced that wage increases totaling \$36 million have taken effect for direct support professionals who work with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to help them live successfully in communities across New Jersey. The announcement came during Direct Support Professional Recognition Week, which ran from Sept. 8 to 14.

This is the second consecutive year reimbursement rates to community providers of developmental disability services have been increased to raise wages for direct support professionals. The wage increases were included in the state budget signed by Governor Murphy. The size of the wage increase per employee is based on factors such as agency pay scales and services provided.

"Direct support professionals play a vital role in helping individuals with disabilities live successfully in communities across the State," **Commissioner Johnson said**. "Their commitment to the individuals they serve has led to better lives for many New Jerseyans. We value the work of direct support professionals and are pleased to announce these wage increases."

"Our direct support professionals provide exemplary and critical support to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities," **said Deputy Commissioner Adelman**. "They dedicate their lives toward empowering individuals with disabilities, which is why we're pleased to be able to announce this increase for these invaluable workers."

To mark Direct Support Professional Recognition Week, Assistant Commissioner Jonathan Seifried, who directs Human Services' Division of Developmental Disabilities, visited The Arc of Camden County, where he recognized the hard work of direct support professionals and presented them with a proclamation from Governor Phil Murphy.

"Direct Support Professionals provide a broad range of support, while developing strong, trusting relationships with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities," **Assistant Commissioner Seifried said**. "They make a tremendous difference in the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities."



From left to right, Thomas Baffuto, Executive Director, The Arc of New Jersey
Peggy Englebert, Executive Director, The Arc of Camden County
Jonathan Seifried, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Developmental Disabilities
JoAnn Rusnak, Director of the Adult Day Programs, The Arc of New Jersey





Murphy Administration Marks Overdose Awareness Day; Urges New Jerseyans to Take Action

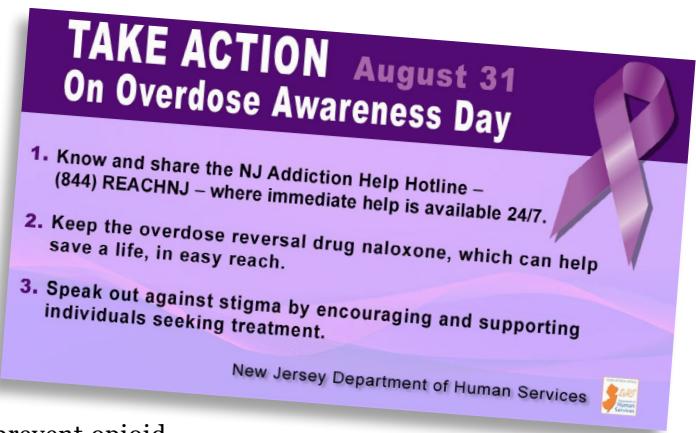
In recognition of International Overdose Awareness Day on August 31st, Commissioner Johnson urged New Jerseyans to take three steps to combat the opioid epidemic in our state.

"On International Overdose Awareness Day, we remember the New Jerseyans we have lost to overdose and their family and friends," **Commissioner Johnson said**. "In their memory, NJ Human Services will continue to use all available tools to turn the tide of the opioid epidemic that has caused far too much heartbreak and devastation for New Jersey families."

The Commissioner urged residents to:

1. Know and share the NJ Addiction Help Hotline – **(844) REACHNJ** – where immediate help from trained addiction counselors is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
2. Keep the opioid overdose reversal drug naloxone, which can help save a life, in easy reach.
3. Speak out against stigma by encouraging and supporting individuals seeking treatment.

"Removing barriers to opioid addiction treatment, increasing knowledge of the risks of addiction and overdoses, and focusing attention on the need to support people in recovery represent important tools in our shared fight to save lives," **Commissioner Johnson said**. "Overdose Awareness Day is an opportunity for all of us working each day across our State to prevent opioid overdoses to reflect on those we have lost and recommit ourselves to the fight ahead."



Jennifer Langer Jacobs Named New Medicaid Director

Commissioner Johnson in July named Jennifer Langer Jacobs as the new Medicaid Director for NJ FamilyCare, which provides health care coverage to 1.7 million New Jersey residents.

Jacobs comes back to New Jersey after having led the largest long-term care plan in Florida. She previously served on the Medicaid leadership team at Amerigroup New Jersey as Chief Operating Officer and worked on legislative initiatives for the New Jersey Senate Majority Office.

"My passion is making government programs work better for the people they serve. I am delighted to have the chance to lead this essential program in New Jersey where I have spent so much of my career," **Assistant Commissioner Jacobs said**. "Medicaid provides comprehensive health care to individuals and communities, requires high quality partnerships across organizations, and represents a critical part of the State's economy. I am very grateful for the opportunity to lead the Medicaid team at such an exciting time."



"I am thrilled that Jenn is coming home to New Jersey to join the Human Services team as Medicaid Director," **Commissioner Johnson said**. "Jenn's commitment to ensuring health equity in maternal and infant health, supporting older and disabled New Jerseyans who want to live as independently as possible in their communities, and turning the tide of the opioid epidemic by expanding access to treatment make her ideally suited to lead these vital programs."

"Jenn is a dynamic leader with deep roots in health policy and Medicaid operations. I am confident she will help us advance the critical work that has been happening in Medicaid under the Murphy Administration to expand access to care," **said Human Services Deputy Commissioner Sarah Adelman**. "Medicaid is life saving and life sustaining for so many New Jerseyans, and our top priority is to ensure that it delivers high quality, affordable health care coverage."





Governor Murphy Announces New Measures to Advance Immigrant and Refugee Integration



New United States citizens take their oath during a July 4 ceremony



Governor Murphy announces new immigrant and refugee initiatives

On Independence Day, Governor Murphy announced two new measures to continue the Administration's unwavering commitment to New Jersey being an inclusive state.

Through Executive Order, the Governor directed the New Jersey Department of Human Services and the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development to advance immigrant and refugee integration initiatives, including the design of an Office of New Americans. The order also establishes an Interagency Workgroup on New American Integration to create opportunities for coordination and implementation of strategies and actions to advance immigrant and refugee integration in New Jersey.

The Governor also announced that the Administration has submitted its intent to the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement to regain the State's role in the oversight of the State's refugee resettlement program. In 2016, the Christie Administration relinquished the state's role in the refugee resettlement program to the federal government. The New Jersey Department

of Human Services has been working collaboratively with the federal government and the International Rescue Committee to return the primary functions of the refugee resettlement program to the state.

"Immigrants are an integral part of our state, and enrich our communities socially, culturally, and economically," **Governor Murphy said.**

The new measures were announced at a naturalization ceremony on the Battleship New Jersey in Camden, where 40 candidates from 23 countries such as the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Guatemala, Iran, India, and Mexico, became U.S. citizens.

"New Jersey is and always will be a welcoming state – no matter the rhetoric or attempts to divide us coming from Washington," **Commissioner Johnson said.** "The Murphy Administration is committed to welcoming new Americans as our neighbors, colleagues and friends, and New Jersey Human Services stands ready to help all new New Jerseyans make our state a more vibrant and prosperous place to live."

"The Murphy Administration is committed to building a stronger and more inclusive state where all New Jerseyans, including immigrants and refugees, have the opportunity to reach their greatest potential, thrive in their community, and fully participate in everything New Jersey has to offer," **Deputy Commissioner Neira said.**



Commissioner Johnson and Deputy Commissioner Neira aboard the Battleship New Jersey





29 years of the Americans with Disabilities Act: It's a powerful idea that has changed lives

Division of Disability Services Director Peri Nearon's op-ed commemorating the 29th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act published on July 26 on nj.com and in The Star-Ledger



The Division of Disability Services helped celebrate the ADA's anniversary by hosting an art sale featuring works by individuals with developmental disabilities

By Peri Nearon

Ideas are powerful things.

They open the world. They eliminate discrimination. They ensure people are defined by potential. They change lives.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is an idea that became reality, which is why it's important each year to pause to recognize the importance of this landmark law and what it means to so many of our fellow New Jerseyans and people across our nation.

July 26 will mark the 29th anniversary of the ADA. That's 29 years of changing lives and perceptions, of equal access and of making clear that we as a society will always stand for the rights of our family members, friends, neighbors, and countless people we've never met to live fulfilling lives, no matter their personal situation.

The ADA allows individuals with disabilities to participate in the world around them, and has likely changed lives in ways many could not have imagined when it became law in 1990, but while we pause each July to remember the benefits of the ADA



Division of Disability Services Director Nearon visited Bacharach Rehab to help commemorate the 29th anniversary of the ADA

and its importance, we also must honor its ideals each and every day of the year.

The ADA provides clear and comprehensive national standards to eliminate discrimination against individuals with disabilities. As a result, individuals with disabilities, as is their right, can live in their home and have equal access to education, jobs, recreation, shopping and entertainment. It has helped shape our nation, but the work is not done. We must remain steadfast to the principles, aiming for greater inclusivity, equality and fairness.

I have the honor of being the director of New Jersey Department of Human Services' Division of Disability Services, which works to streamline access to services and information to promote and enhance independent living for individuals with all disabilities.

Our goal is to promote maximum independence and full participation of people with disabilities within all aspects of community life.

Through our toll free hotline, 1-888-285-3036, the division responds to requests for assistance. Certified Information and referral specialists are available to confidentially discuss issues, provide information, assist with problem solving and refer individuals to appropriate agencies or services.

We also publish New Jersey Resources, a comprehensive guide to services available throughout the state. I urge everyone to download a copy.

We also administer some great programs such as the Traumatic Brain Injury Fund, and the Personal Assistance Services Program, both of which offer vital assistance to help individuals with disabilities live as independently as possible within our communities. Additionally, we can help people to access NJ ABLE, which allows individuals with disabilities to save for expenses without losing eligibility for their Medicaid and other benefits. And we work with our partners at Human Services, including the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, the Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Division of Developmental Disabilities, which serves individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The ADA rightfully opened the world to individuals with disabilities. We must ensure that equal access remains a priority, while doing whatever we can to assist individuals with disabilities to live full and independent lives. We are here to help. Give us a call or visit us at nj.gov/humanservices/dds/services/ to learn more. Together, we can continue ensuring people are defined by their potential. We can change lives.



Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services Hosts 5th Annual Suicide Prevention Conference



Nearly 500 health care providers, advocates and others attended the September 10th Suicide Prevention Conference hosted by the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) to discuss how to be better prepared to engage with patients about their behavioral health, especially suicidal thoughts and ideation.

Human Services' Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services hosted the day-long conference, entitled "Health Care Communities: A Crucial Setting for Suicide Prevention" at the War Memorial in Trenton.

"Our conference recognizes those we have lost to suicide and emphasizes the importance of suicide prevention with a particular focus on health care settings," **Commissioner Johnson said.**

"We know that health care professionals are often on the front lines and we want to help provide more tools and information to identify

and address risk," **Assistant Commissioner Mielke** told the medical and behavioral health care providers, first responders, advocates, consumers, and parents in attendance that "it really takes all of us to meet the challenges of suicide prevention."

Assistant Commissioner Mielke noted research finds that at least 45 percent of people who died by suicide had visited a primary care provider within a month prior. These data underscore the importance of giving doctors, nurses and other primary health care providers the tools they need to be engaged with their patients' behavioral health.

Virna Little, PsyD, of the CUNY School of Public Health addressed the critical role first responders and emergency department personnel play in screening people for suicidal ideation.

Dr. Shawn Christopher Shea of the Training Institute of Suicide Assessment and Clinical Interviewing provided attendees with screening tools to help assess the level of someone's suicidal thoughts while examining them in a primary care setting.

"It's not enough to listen well, you have to apply skilled interviewing techniques," **Dr. Shea said.**





Murphy Administration Boosts Payments for Families and Individuals in Need

Benefits are increasing by 20 percent for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and General Assistance recipients, Commissioner Johnson announced.

The announcement is part of the Murphy Administration's ongoing effort to build a stronger and fairer New Jersey and comes on the heels of a 10 percent increase in these programs last fiscal year, which was the first meaningful benefit increase in nearly 30 years.

"The Murphy Administration is committed to helping families get on the strongest possible financial footing," **Commissioner Johnson said**. "Providing increased income assistance to our neighbors in need is the right approach. It will help families with additional income at a crucial time and put more money back into the New Jersey economy, which will benefit everyone."

Under this year's increase, a family of three under WorkFirst NJ will see their maximum benefits payment increase to \$559 per month from \$466, while an individual under General Assistance will see their maximum benefit payment increase to \$185 per month from \$154.

"These increases are another crucial step forward in the Murphy Administration's efforts to build a fairer New Jersey," **said Deputy Commissioner Neira**. "These increases and the benefits provided to families and individuals in these programs are critical in protecting the most vulnerable New Jerseyans."

Residents can apply for WorkFirst NJ benefits at their county Board of Social Services or by visiting www.njhelps.org.



NJ Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired's Jasmine Murrell Tells Her Story as a Paralympics Athlete



Every four years prior to the Paralympic Games, the ParaPan American Games takes place following the conclusion of the Pan American Games. With the Paralympic Games right around the corner in 2020, 2019 was a chance for the Americas (South America, North America and Central America) to battle it out!

The ParaPan American Games took place in Lima, Peru from August 24th to August 31st. A total

of about 33 different countries competed in sports such as wheelchair basketball, wheelchair rugby, swimming, cycling, goalball, seated volleyball, tennis, judo, archery, and track and field (there was about 18 sports in total). The United States brought 267 delegation members (this included athletes, coaches, support staff and guides). All athletes participating in the Games had a disability and received the appropriate

classification based on said disability.

I have been competing in track and field since 2015. I am classified as a T12 and F12. People in this category experience vision loss and have a choice to have a guide. I have competed in several meets, but this was my first major international competition as part of Team USA.

I flew to Lima, Peru on August 19th. We had a Pre-Games training camp that started on August 20th. Opening Ceremony for the Games took place on August 23rd. The events that I competed in were the 100m and long jump. I didn't perform as well as I would have liked, but I gave it my all. I injured myself during training prior to competition beginning.

The atmosphere was electric! On my journey to the Paralympic Games, this was the experience I needed. Performing on this stage at that level was life changing for me. My injury was a huge disappointment, but I was able to turn it around and find the positive from it! Once I recover, I will resume training again. And, I was able to make great connections with people who could help me along my Paralympic journey.

- Jasmine Murrell
JKTC Fitness Instructor





Governor Murphy Signs Legislation to Establish State-Based Health Exchange in New Jersey



To help all New Jersey residents get affordable health care coverage, Governor Murphy signed legislation to establish a State-Based Health Exchange in New Jersey. The law will allow New Jersey greater control over its health insurance market and the ability to establish stronger protections against the Trump Administration's sabotage of the Affordable Care Act.

"New Jersey has advanced strong policies to protect access to health care for our residents, which I believe is a human right. With this law, we take another step in securing the access

families need to gain more affordable health coverage. Creating our own exchange will allow us to take actions that protect residents in our state, and will ensure we are in the best position in New Jersey to defend against the Trump Administration's assault on the Affordable Care Act," **said Governor Murphy**. "I want to thank the many tireless advocates that helped get this legislation over the finish line. This bill makes it so that New Jersey can continue its work to ensure that all residents have access to the coverage and care they deserve."

"As someone whose life's work has focused on getting people affordable, quality health care coverage, I am delighted to be part of an Administration that is leading the way in protecting the Affordable Care Act and that the Governor and Legislature have worked together to protect affordable coverage in our state," **said Commissioner Johnson**, who worked on the Affordable Care Act as a senior health policy advisor in the Obama White House. "Governor Murphy is once again standing up for the health care needs of us all."

Five Students Awarded Scholarships at Human Services' Annual Blind and Visually Impaired Awareness Night



Highlighting the achievements of people who are blind and visually impaired, five New Jersey students were awarded college scholarships at Human Services' 14th Annual Blind and Visually Impaired Awareness Night at the Trenton Thunder on June 27.

Deputy Commissioner Neira and Bernice Davis, the Executive Director of Human Services' Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, recognized the achievements of the awardees during a pre-game ceremony. The event was sponsored by the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, the New Jersey State Library Talking Book & Braille Center and the Trenton Thunder.

"Those who are blind and visually impaired can accomplish anything – and these amazing students are stellar examples of that for all of New Jersey," **Commissioner Johnson said**. "I am so proud of their achievements and look forward to them helping create a better New Jersey in the years ahead."

"I'm excited to honor these extraordinary students on the week Governor Murphy proclaimed Deaf Blindness Awareness Week in New Jersey to celebrate the achievements of those who are blind and visually impaired," **Deputy Commissioner Neira said**. "I look forward to the continued success of these five students and am excited for them to use their tremendous talents to help shape a more inclusive and diverse New Jersey."

This year's awardees are Amy Albin of Morris Plains, Mihir Doshi of Belle Mead, Natasha Ishaq of Princeton, Sena Pottackal, of Cherry Hill and Jonathan Zobek of Kenilworth.





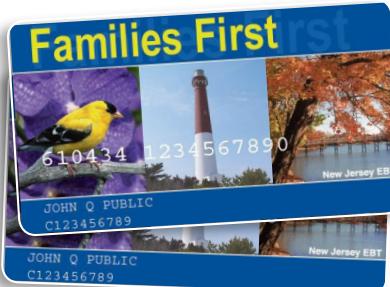
Many Human Services Program Recipients Get Free or Discounted Admission at More Than 85 New Jersey Arts and History Organizations

The Families First Discovery Pass is a new program in New Jersey designed to provide families and individuals enrolled in state assistance programs with greater access to arts and history events, venues and programs statewide.

Residents who receive food assistance through SNAP, cash assistance through the WorkFirst NJ program or child care assistance through NJ Child Care Subsidy program or WIC are eligible for free or steeply discounted admission at museums, theatres, historic sites, workshops, festivals, and more.

The program is a joint venture between the NJ State Council on the Arts, the NJ Historical Commission, the NJ Department of Human Services, the NJ Department of Health and many of the best arts and historical organizations across the state.

"We are proud to announce the Families First Discovery Pass because every New Jersey resident should have access to the rich history, arts, and cultural heritage of our state," said **Secretary of State Tahesha Way**, who oversees the Department of State, including the State Arts Council and the Historical Commission.



"These experiences improve our quality of life, strengthen our families and communities, and support lifelong learning."

To receive the discount, patrons show their Families First card or WIC Identification Folder. For a full list of participating organizations, what they offer and how to access the discounts, visit www.FamiliesFirstDiscoveryPass.com.

"I encourage everyone to take advantage of this great initiative to expand access to New Jersey's wonderful cultural organizations and events," said **Commissioner Johnson**. "Human Services' programs are here to provide opportunity and support to those in need and, with this initiative and partnership, our programs will now also open doors to our state's history and culture. We thank the State Council on the Arts and the Historical Commission for their leadership in making this initiative possible."

For more information on the program and for a full listing of participating organizations, visit www.FamiliesFirstDiscoveryPass.com.

New Jersey Department of Human Services

New Jersey Resources 2019-2020

Be sure to download your copy of New Jersey Resources 2019-2020! It's a comprehensive guide detailing the programs and services the [NJ Department of Human Services](#) offers to residents, caregivers and advocates.

[Click here to view and download a copy.](#)





Program Spotlight

Our newsletter will regularly shine a spotlight on NJ Human Services programs and the employees behind these initiatives. This edition highlights DDD's Housing's Subsidy Unit and the Office of Program Integrity and Accountability.

The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) Housing Subsidy Program

The Office of Housing within the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) strives to expand opportunities for New Jersey adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live independently. DDD's Housing Subsidy Program is a



Office of Housing Subsidy: L to R, front row: Jemille Green, Daniel Aiello. Back row: Helen Guice, Courtney Davey

statewide collaborative initiative offering individuals and their families the benefit of choice through flexible, tenant-based housing assistance. The Housing Subsidy Unit's objective to increase access to affordable housing is met through partnering across DDD and with the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs.

DDD's Housing Subsidy Unit:

- provides guidance to families seeking information on housing assistance
- distributes information on tenant rights
- conducts trainings for community providers
- processes new referrals and reviews applications for eligibility
- responds to inquiries from individuals, families and community providers

Through its collaborations, dedication and hard work the Housing Subsidy Unit has connected more than 7,800 individuals with housing assistance.

Office of Program Integrity and Accountability (OPIA) Incident Verification Unit

The Office of Program Integrity and Accountability (OPIA) has direct responsibility for key functions critical to helping ensure the health, safety and well-being of individuals served by Human Services. OPIA works closely with the Department's divisions and external partners in providing oversight of service provision. It also supports safety, efficiency and accountability within an array of Human Services programs and initiatives.

OPIA has direct responsibility for incident management and investigations; licensing of many Human Services programs; incident verification field visits; field-based safety checks of individuals residing in community programs; various on-boarding activities, including fingerprint checks and child abuse



record checks for prospective employees of thousands of human services-oriented facility and community programs serving adults and children; drug testing, risk management functions, administration of the Department's Central Registry; and supports Human Services facilities in nutrition and food service management.

Most recently, OPIA fully implemented the provisions of the Stephen Komninos' Law. The law, effective on May 1, 2018, advances the Department's efforts in providing quality services and strengthens protections for adults with developmental disabilities living in the community.

*Armand DiBlasio and Diana Falquez
of the Incident Verification Unit*





Acting Governor Oliver Signs Legislation Assisting Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community



Acting Governor Sheila Oliver in August signed into law bills establishing a Deaf Student's Bill of Rights and a Working Group on Deaf Education.

"To ensure that every deaf student in New Jersey acquires the same high quality education as other students, I am proudly signing these two bills today establishing a Deaf Student's Bill of Rights along with other initiatives for research, advocacy, and parental guidance," said **Acting Governor Oliver**.

"Access to early intervention supports and ongoing services

throughout the lives of children who are deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind can make a significant difference by developing strong language and literacy skills that will help them succeed," said **Commissioner Johnson**. "With these bill signings, New Jersey is making clear that we support building strong futures for deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind children."

"The bill signings were an amazing opportunity for the deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind community to come together to celebrate their advocacy on behalf of children and their families who are on their journey for language equity and educational achievement," said **Elizabeth Hill, Director for Human Services' Division of Deaf and Hard of Hearing**. "We're excited by these additional resources and supports and the benefits they will bring to so many."

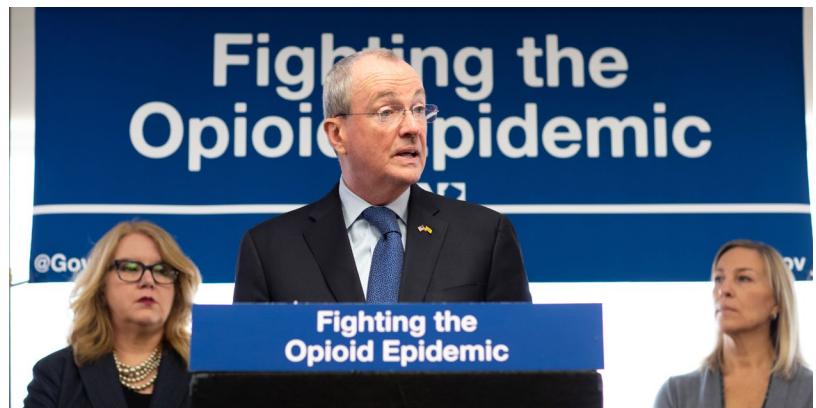
Human Services Trains Health Care Providers to Treat Opioid Addiction

NJ Human Services continues training doctors, advanced practice nurses and physician assistants to treat opioid addiction with medication-assisted treatment. Hundreds of providers have been trained to date. The project is part of the Governor's opioid initiative.

"NJ Human Services is committed to making opioid addiction treatment as accessible as possible," said **Commissioner Johnson**. "We are excited by the health care community's response to our training sessions and their shared commitment to making opioid addiction treatment more readily available across our State. The Murphy Administration is working to expand treatment options not only by funding treatment initiatives and changing how we pay for treatment services in programs like Medicaid, but by supporting and growing the number of health care providers offering opioid addiction treatment."

The Department is funding Cooper Medical School of Rowan University and Rutgers New Jersey Medical School in Newark to train health care providers in the use of medication-assisted treatment for opioid addiction (MAT). MAT is the clinical standard for opioid addiction treatment. Training sessions will continue into the fall.

"We are continuously working to increase access to substance use disorder treatment, particularly medication-assisted treatment for opioid use disorder," said **Assistant Commissioner Mielke**. "Treatment works, and we are delighted that more and more health care providers are getting ready to offer medication-assisted treatment."





NJ Human Services Awarded New Funding to Protect Older New Jerseyans



NJ Human Services received a grant for more than \$1 million from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Community Living to improve reporting and tracking of elder abuse, exploitation and neglect.

Through its Division of Aging Services, Human Services will use the three-year grant to design and build a statewide infrastructure to support its Adult Protective Services (APS) provider network.

"As our population ages, we have an obligation to help ensure that older New Jerseyans are safe and well cared for

in our communities," **said Commissioner Johnson**. "Building a standardized way to identify, track and assess outcomes for elder abuse, neglect and exploitation is key to achieving that goal. We are pleased New Jersey has secured these federal resources to advance our efforts to protect our older residents."

"This will be a big step forward in our efforts to combat elder abuse, exploitation and neglect," **said Division of Aging Services Director Louise Rush**.

The Adult Protective Services network includes health care professionals, law enforcement officers, firefighters, paramedics and emergency medical technicians who, under state law, are required to report suspected cases of vulnerable adult abuse neglect or exploitation to their county Adult Protective Services office.

Anyone who suspects abuse, neglect or exploitation of such a person is urged to call their local Adult Protective Services agency or, in an emergency situation, 9-1-1 or their local police.

Watch Commissioner Johnson participate in a town hall hosted by 6ABC and ABC7 on the opioid crisis. The town hall was livestreamed on the Internet and intermittently broadcast live on television. Click [Here](#) to watch.





NJ Human Services **SNAPSHOTS**

Fighting the Opioid Epidemic



Governor Murphy and Commissioner Johnson



Rutgers' Eagleton Science Fellows met with Human Services Commissioner Johnson to discuss public service

Voting Drive



NJ Human Services marked National Disability Voter Registration Week at a State House rally organized by Rev Up





NJ Human Services **SNAPSHOTS** *Continued*



Commissioner Johnson joined the NJ Reentry Corporation and Care Plus NJ, where they announced enhanced addiction treatment services for the re-entry population



Human Services fellow Daniela Jara graduates from NJ Center for Hispanic Policy, Research and Development. She was joined by Deputy Commissioner Neira



Deputy Commissioner Neira joined the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired's SHARP program this summer



Division of Aging Services Director Rush presented the Governor's Older Americans Month proclamation to the leadership of the New Jersey Area Agencies on Aging Association



Commissioner Johnson spoke at the Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Pathways to Recovery program to support employment opportunities for individuals in recovery



Commissioner Johnson spoke on the importance of nurse leadership at a National Academy of Medicine forum





NJ Human Services **SNAPSHOTS** *Continued*



NJ Human Services conducted a training for college financial aid advisors about critical programs like food and child care assistance



Commissioner Johnson joined Steve Adubato for NJTV's State of Affairs to discuss her work to address the opioid epidemic and invest in child care

Felman Middleton Jr. Community Center



Commissioner Johnson meets with older adults during a visit to the Felman Middleton Jr. Community Center at Newark's Weequahic Park



Deputy Commissioner Neira and Assistant Commissioner Johnson joined parents at an Administration for Children and Families roundtable in Vineland. Human Services highlighted the Murphy Administration's investments in child care





NJ Human Services **SNAPSHOTS** *Continued*

First Lady Tammy Murphy's Family First Festival in Atlantic City





NJ Human Services **SNAPSHOTS**

Continued

Medicaid Transformation



Commissioner Johnson with Andy Slavitt and Vikki Wachino at the Medicaid Transformation Project Action Forum at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia

Deputy Commissioner Adelman was the speaker at the Southern New Jersey Chamber of Commerce

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program



Commissioner Johnson met with Assemblyman Vince Mazzeo to discuss the importance of healthy eating and the value of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program



Commissioner Johnson met with The Press of Atlantic City editorial board to discuss Human Services' efforts to combat the opioid epidemic





Community Voices



"New Jersey is becoming a national leader in addressing the opioid crisis and these trainings are the perfect doorway for providers and all members of the healthcare team to get involved."

- Dr. Erin Zerbo, Assistant Professor,
Department of Psychiatry,
Rutgers New Jersey Medical School
and attending psychiatrist,
Department of Psychiatry,
University Hospital

"NJSNA supports NJ Human Services Commissioner Carole Johnson in her efforts to increase the number of health care providers, including Advanced Practice Nurses, to be able to treat opioid addiction through Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)."

- Judith Schmidt, CEO of the New Jersey State Nurses Association

"With the creation of a state exchange, New Jersey is cementing itself as a national leader in keeping health coverage affordable."

- Ray Castro of NJ Policy Perspective

"The IRC is committed to working in partnership with Human Services to strengthen programs and services to ensure that refugees are welcomed, are achieving their full potential, and contributing back to their respective communities."

- International Rescue Committee

"We at the Islamic Center of Passaic County (ICPC) express our deepest gratitude to Governor Murphy and his administration for taking these truly courageous actions that uplift our Immigrant and Refugee communities."

- Islamic Center of Passaic County staff
Omar Awad, Salaheddin Mustafa, and Dr.
Mohammad Qatanani

"We applaud the Governor for taking quick action and are excited that New Jersey health care consumers will be protected and have a more seamless and accessible enrollment process."

- Maura Collinsgru,
Healthcare Programs Director
at New Jersey Citizen Action

"Thank you for your leadership, @GovMurphy. The contrast couldn't be more stark: as our president lines the streets of Washington, DC with tanks & threatens mass deportations, in NJ we celebrate our freedom by lifting up immigrant families & building a more just & inclusive state."

- Make the Road New Jersey @MaketheRoadNJ



Community Voices *Continued*

"We welcome Governor Murphy's continued prioritization of the safety and well-being of immigrants and refugees in the state of New Jersey."

- Evan R. Bernstein, Regional Director of ADL
New York/New Jersey Office

"As one of the most diverse states in the nation with the third highest percentage of immigrant residents, New Jersey putting into practice welcoming all who call New Jersey home will make this state more successful."

- Johanna Calle, Director of
New Jersey Alliance of Immigrant Justice

"Inspiring to hear NJ leading in improving access to medication assisted treatment #MAT through primary care providers to address substance use disorders."

#SUD #opioids - @NJDHS
#FutureofNursing2030

- Nurse-Led Care@NurseLedCare

"Excited NJ is a leader in #doulas as the route to eliminating large racial #disparities in #maternalmortality and severe maternal morbidities. #Medicaid as payer is key to sustainability and scaling."

- Kim Boller@KimBoller1

"This is something I have advocated for my entire career, and I am grateful the Murphy Administration shares in my determination to make quality childcare accessible for all parents in our state."

- Senator Teresa Ruiz

<https://www.njsendems.org/>

"New Jersey is taking major strides in providing families and children facing deep poverty with critical basic assistance and work supports. This would not be possible without the leadership of @GovMurphy @NJSenatePres @SpeakerCoughlin @SenJoeVitale and @NJDHS."

- New Jersey Policy Perspective
@NJPpolicy





Community Voices

Continued

"Great news for young children!
So important that NJ is investing in child care to
help working families AND provide high-quality
early education for our youngest children.
Well done!!"

- Cecilia Zalkind @CeciliaZalkind

"Our fight against the public charge rule
wouldn't be possible without
Commissioner Carole Johnson and her
@NJDHS team. Every day they serve our immigrant
communities and stand up for them.
Proud to partner with her in this fight."
- AG Gurbir Grewal @NewJerseyOAG

"During DSP Recognition Week,
we want to thank all the hardworking
DSPs in NJ who do so much for people with
I/DD! We are so grateful for all you do.
And thank you @GovMurphy @LtGovOliver &
@NJDHS for proclaiming 9/8-9/14 as
DSP Recognition Week!"
- The Arc of NJ @thearcnj

"Thank you @GovMurphy @NJSenatePres
@SpeakerCoughlin @SenVitale and
@NJDHS Commissioner for your leadership
on major TANF improvements after 30 yrs.
so our most vulnerable families get critical,
basic assistance and work supports."
- Anti-Poverty Network
@anti_poverty_nj

"@GovMurphy @FirstLadyNJ @NJDHS announced a
\$54 million investment in #childcare. This is great news for
families enrolled in NJ's child care subsidy program,
which helps low-income working afford care.
<https://acnj.salsalabs.org/nj-dhs-child-care-announcement/>"
@RightStartNJ #ThinkBabies @NicholsonForNJ
- TurrellFund

"Commissioner Johnson has taken a bold necessary step
in partnering with our county jails to provide MAT to addicted persons Our clients
are vulnerable, their resistance is low, and their drug cravings are high. Having MAT will help
persons survive and stabilize those first few weeks outside of jail. It's the difference between
survival and a 'second chance' at sobriety. Commissioner Carole Johnson is saving lives."
- Former Governor and New Jersey Reentry Corporation
Chairman James E. McGreevey





Human Services In The News

New Jersey Childcare to Get \$54 Million Boost

NJBIZ - Aug. 6, 2019

State to give county jails \$8 million for medically assisted opioid treatment

PRESS OF ATLANTIC CITY – Sept. 20, 2019

State Expands Addiction Treatment Programs in County Jails

NJSPOTLIGHT – Sept. 23, 2019

Murphy makes NJ 12th state with own health insurance exchange

NJSpotlight - July 1, 2019

NJ helping health pros learn about medication-assisted treatment for addicts

NJ 101.5 – July 2, 2019

Gov. Murphy signs order to create office to help immigrants, refugees resettle in state

News12 NJ - July 4, 2019

Murphy Makes 2 Moves on July 4 to Help N.J. Immigrants

NJ.com - July 4, 2019



Human Services In The News

Continued

New Jersey to Resume Oversight of Refugee Resettlement

Associated Press - July 5, 2019

State ramps up training in latest treatment for opioid addiction

NJSpotlight - July 9, 2019

Human Services Commissioner Names New Medicaid Director

TapInto.net – July 9, 2019

Health officials urge older adults to take precautions during the heat wave

WFMZ – JULY 20, 2019

Oliver signs legislation to assist students, hard-of-hearing community

NJBIZ - Aug. 6, 2019

DISTRIBUTION AND USE OF NALOXONE RISE IN NJ AND ACROSS NATION

NJSpotlight - Aug. 9, 2019





Human Services In The News

Continued

NEW JERSEY 'ALL IN' ON INCREASING ACCESS TO LIFE-SAVING NARCAN

NJ 101.5 - May 20, 2019

New Jersey increases aid to the poor by 20%

AP NEWS - Sept. 4, 2019

Trenton conference focuses on role of doctors in suicide prevention

NJTV – Sept. 16, 2019

Paterson Men's Shelter to Offer Opioid Overdose Antidote Under New State Program

Tapinto.net PATERSON – Sept. 18, 2019

NJ giving away more free naloxone, now at homeless shelters

NJ 101.5 – Sept. 17 2019

Camden Shelters to Receive Free Doses of Opioid Overdose Antidote

Tapinto.net CAMDEN- Sept. 17, 2019

State provides naloxone to homeless shelters, including AC Rescue Mission

PRESS OF ATLANTIC CITY – Sept. 18, 2019





Human Services



Beat the Heat

Tips For Seniors on How to Beat the Heat from NJ Division of Aging Services Director Rush.



Deaf-Blind Awareness Week

A message from Commissioner Johnson, CBVI Executive Director Dr. Bernice Davis and DDHH Director Elizabeth Hill highlighting Deaf-Blind Awareness Week in New Jersey.



National Disability Voter Registration Week

Division of Disability Services Executive Director Nearon with a message for National Disability Voter Registration Week: 'Let your voice be heard. Because your vote counts.'



World Hepatitis Day

A message about expanded Medicaid coverage for Hepatitis C treatment from Medical Director for Medicaid, Tom Lind.

Click on titles to watch DHS videos on YouTube.

Stay Connected with NJ Human Services

NJ Department of Human Services

is on Social Media!

Follow us on:

