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NEWSLETTER | APRIL 2024



NJ Human Services Awards Contracts to Develop Crisis Diversion Homes

Human Services Commissioner Sarah Adelman announced the Department has awarded more than \$3.6 million in contracts to develop recovery-oriented crisis diversion homes, which will provide care and services to individuals who have recently experienced a mental health crisis.

“[Crisis diversion homes](#) offer a supportive environment for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis and, by focusing on stabilization and empowerment, promote long-lasting recovery,” **said Commissioner Adelman.** “We look forward to these homes operating in Warren, Mercer, and Gloucester counties and ensuring those in need get help.”

“These homes are meant to act as a stepping stone for those experiencing a crisis to seek long-term recovery. Getting crisis services right is critical to engaging individuals in mental health follow-up services,” **said Assistant Commissioner Valerie Mielke, who directs Human Services’ [Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services](#).** “Crisis diversion homes are meant to provide a safe and supportive environment where individuals can address the crisis and develop a plan post-discharge.”

More [HERE](#)



DIVISION OF THE DEAF AND
HARD OF HEARING

**COMMUNICATION
ACCESS**

*Helping providers obtain sign
language interpreting and
captioning services.*



NJ Human Services Awards Additional Grants to Improve Access to County Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals

Human Services Commissioner Sarah Adelman announced the Department has awarded \$312,555 in additional funding to five counties to improve communication and language access to county services for deaf and hard of hearing residents of all ages.

“We are pleased to award these additional grants to our county partners and to support community areas becoming more accessible for deaf and hard of hearing New Jerseyans,” **Commissioner Adelman said.** “Inclusion and language access empowers deaf and hard of hearing individuals to more fully engage in their communities, create connections, and obtain critical information.”

The program is supported by Human Services’ [Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing \(DDHH\)](#).

“Communication and language play a pivotal role in shaping our connections, perceptions and how we consume essential information. These additional grants empower New Jerseyans who are deaf and hard of hearing to navigate the world around them with ease and clarity. We congratulate the counties who received funding and look forward to seeing the impact this work will have,” **Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Executive Director Elizabeth Hill said.**

More [HERE](#)



**Young Audiences Inspires with United We Discover
Arts Program for Students with Disabilities; Program
Funded by NJ Human Services' Inclusive Healthy
Communities Grant Program**

Young Audiences of New Jersey & Eastern Pennsylvania has launched an innovative arts program designed to provide enriching arts experiences for students with disabilities in New Jersey.

Called United We Discover, the program promotes inclusivity and creativity in education, ensuring that every child, regardless of ability, has the opportunity to explore the transformative power of the arts. The initiative is funded in part by an [Inclusive Healthy Communities \(IHC\)](#) grant from NJ Human Services' Division of Disability Service. United We Discover is currently available in Paterson, Newark, Hightstown, and New Brunswick. Programming is offered during the school day and in collaboration with classroom teachers.

“A well-rounded education includes the arts, and we want to ensure that students with disabilities have access and opportunities to explore and participate in arts programming,” **Human Services Commissioner Sarah Adelman said.** “We’re excited about our partnership with Young Audiences and how this program aims to increase positive perceptions, inclusion, and equitable experiences for individuals with disabilities.”

“The IHC program is working to build more inclusive communities, and expanding access to the arts for individuals with disabilities is an important component of this work,” **Human Services Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services Kaylee McGuire said.** “The impact of this program not only supports youth with disabilities, but also changes societal perceptions and brings families and communities together.”

“Participating in the arts benefits children in any number of ways — self-expression, problem-solving, self-confidence, empathy — and it helps build social connections between kids of all abilities,” **said Peri L. Nearon, Executive Director of the Division of Disability Services.** “We’re delighted to support the development of the United We Discover program, because it helps to bring a first-hand, inclusive experience of the arts to every student in New Jersey.”

More [HERE](#)



Rowan-Virtua RISN Center Using NJ Human Services Inclusive Healthy Communities Grant to Improve Healthcare for Women with Developmental Disabilities

The [Rowan-Virtua Regional Integrated Special Needs \(RISN\) Center](#), South Jersey's first primary care practice dedicated to serving individuals with complex special needs, has launched an initiative to improve sexual and reproductive healthcare for women with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

Funded in part by an [Inclusive Healthy Communities \(IHC\)](#) grant from the New Jersey Department of Human Services' Division of Disability Services, the effort aims to elevate the standard of care and eliminate healthcare disparities by reducing the stigma associated with sexuality education, deescalating patient fears, addressing potential histories of sexual trauma, and empowering patients to participate in their own healthcare decisions.

“Our Inclusive Healthy Communities program aims to enhance accessibility and health, and that includes ensuring women with intellectual and developmental disabilities receive the same equitable access to vital health care services,” **Human Services Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services Kaylee McGuire said.** “Whether it be routine women’s health examinations or more in-depth personalized care, women with IDD deserve health equity.”

“One of the goals of the IHC program is to support innovation at the local level that will stimulate change on a wider scale, and that’s what we’re seeing at the RISN Center,” **Division of Disability Services Executive Director Peri L. Nearon said.** “We’re confident that the RISN Center’s initiative can serve as a model and an inspiration for improving healthcare for women with IDD and other disabilities throughout New Jersey and beyond.”

More [HERE](#)



Trenton Health Team Uses IHC Grant to Enhance Food Access for People with Disabilities

The Trenton Health Team in collaboration with local partners and stakeholders has launched an effort to improve access to food pantries for individuals with disabilities in Mercer County. The initiative is funded in part by an [Inclusive Healthy Communities \(IHC\)](#) grant from the New Jersey Department of Human Services' [Division of Disability Services](#).

Since the U.S. Department of Agriculture finds that food insecurity is more common and severe in households that include an individual with a disability, the [Trenton Health Team](#) has developed a plan to make food pantries across Mercer County more inclusive and accessible.

“Governor Murphy’s Administration, with our partners in the community and in the Legislature, has been focused on policy solutions that help New Jersey families achieve food security through a wide range of efforts,” **Human Services Commissioner Sarah Adelman said.** “The Trenton Health Team has been a great partner, and we applaud their commitment to reaching out to and serving individuals with disabilities, including by helping to make food pantries more accommodating and accessible. Food security means a healthier New Jersey for all, and individuals with disabilities must be a part of that effort.”

“We’re thrilled to partner with the Trenton Health Team on this much-needed initiative that will help ensure individuals with disabilities have equal access to the resources and assistance available at food pantries,” **Human Services Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services Kaylee McGuire said.** “We look forward to seeing the benefits of these efforts serve as a model for the rest of the state.”

“Everybody needs access to healthy food,” **Division of Disability Services Executive Director Peri L. Nearon** said. “By focusing on the needs of people with disabilities, the Trenton Health Team is helping to create a more inclusive and equitable food system in Mercer County and we are learning important lessons about how to replicate their strategies elsewhere in New Jersey.”

More [HERE](#)



Make A Difference
Become a Direct Support Professional!

JobsThatCare.NJ.GOV

Biden-Harris Administration Partners with New Jersey to Strengthen the Direct Care Workforce

New Jersey is [among 20 states that will join](#) two technical assistance programs to help better recruit, train, and retain direct care workers, who provide home and community-based services for older adults and people with disabilities.

Each state receives up to 250 hours of individualized technical assistance to support them in addressing direct care worker challenges. Each team includes reps from the state's Medicaid, aging, disability & workforce development agencies, in addition to other stakeholders.

New Jersey plans to create and implement a comprehensive strategy that focuses on providing training and career development for direct care workers by partnering with existing programs across the state. Will also conduct a formal needs assessment and strategic planning process.

Human Services including the [Division of Developmental Disabilities](#), [Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services](#), [Division of Aging Services](#), and the [Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services](#) will serve as the primary lead agency. NJDHS will be joined by the [Office of the Secretary of Higher Education](#) and the [Department of Labor and Workforce Development](#).

More [HERE](#)



New Jersey Human Services to Embed Nurse Care Managers into Outpatient Substance Use Disorder Treatment Agencies to Address Co-occurring Health Needs

Human Services Commissioner Sarah Adelman announced the Department has awarded contracts to embed nurse care managers into outpatient substance use disorder treatment agencies.

The awards aim to help ensure other health care needs of individuals being served at substance use disorder treatment agencies are met, especially the prevention and treatment of hepatitis C.

The \$1.66 million federally funded plan focuses on improving the overall health and wellbeing of individuals served by the agencies, with an emphasis on the treatment of hepatitis C and the integration of clients' behavioral and medical healthcare.

“As we continue to integrate behavioral and physical health care, it’s important that treatment includes nurse care management, case management and health coaching to reduce identifiable health risks associated with hepatitis C, other infectious diseases and medical issues that people managing opioid use disorder are at high risk of contracting,” **Commissioner Adelman said.** “Research shows that behavioral health interventions help people successfully initiate and remain in care for hepatitis C and substance use disorder treatments. By reducing barriers to seeking treatments for disease, we can help the whole person.”

[Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services](#) Assistant Commissioner Valerie Mielke said all clients served by the agencies that received the contract will be eligible for the services.

“All clients who test positive for chronic or acute illness must be offered and encouraged to receive treatment, case management and health coaching to increase the likelihood that their overall well-being improves,” **Assistant Commissioner Mielke said.** “We will be meeting the individuals where they are in their treatment.”

More [HERE](#)





Bring Your Child to Work Day

NJ Human Services celebrated "Bring Your Child to Work" Day on April 25th. Children of DHS employees had a day full of activities that helped them learn more about our various divisions and programs.

The day started with t-shirt making, and moved to planting seeds, and then meeting our K-9 dogs along with learning how our Human Services police officers use drones. After lunch we took a walk to the Trenton War Memorial to Blow Bubbles for Autism! [NJ Department of Human Services](#) and [New Jersey Department of Children and Families](#) gathered together to bring awareness to autism and Autism Acceptance Month 2024.

The day finished up with a choose your own adventure, either a tour of the State House or the Planetarium.

Check out our photo album [HERE](#).



[Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services](#) Assistant Commissioner Valerie Mielke joined [Capital Health](#) to celebrate the achievements of mothers and children involved in the Human Services funded [For My Baby & Me](#) program, a substance use disorder treatment program for pregnant women and new mothers. The stories and bravery displayed by program graduates that day were truly inspiring, and Assistant Commissioner Mielke underscored the Division's commitment to partnering with consumers, family members, providers and others to promote wellness and recovery for individuals managing mental illness, substance use disorder, or co-occurring disorders.



Congratulations to Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services
Kaylee McGuire for receiving The [Arc of New Jersey's](#)
[Statewide Self-Advocacy Network's](#) Unmatched Dedication Award!



Congratulations to Patricia Brennan, Director of [Division of Developmental Disabilities' Office of Education on Self-Directed Services](#), on receiving Charting the LifeCourse Nexus' "Innovations for Engaging and Supporting Families" award at the Charting the [LifeCourse Showcase](#) in Kansas City.



NJ Human Services Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services Kaylee McGuire was honored to join [New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection](#)'s Commissioner Shawn LaTourette in announcing \$33.1 million in funding to open [49 Completely Inclusive Playgrounds](#) across New Jersey at the Monroe Community Garden.

Deputy Commissioner McGuire was joined by DHS' [Division of Disability Services](#) Executive Director Peri Nearon, Director of the NJ Department of Environmental Protection's Green Acres Program Martha Sapp and Monroe Township Mayor Stephen Dalina.



NJ Human Services' [Cover All Kids](#) implementation leader Maria Terlecki joined the [Camden Coalition](#) to highlight how eligible families can apply for NJ FamilyCare for their children, regardless of immigration status.

Apply today at <http://njfamilycare.org>.



NJ Human Services [Division of Developmental Disabilities](#) Outreach Team participated in a Community Resource Fair held by the [Center for Independent Living of South Jersey](#). They had an information table and represented the DDD Office of Transition to Adult Life & Employment.

For more info: <https://nj.gov/humanservices/ddd/individuals/transition/>

April is Women's Wellness Month

The Murphy Administration is committed to improving maternal health by implementing multiple programs to improve health outcomes for all women in New Jersey! To learn more, click the program graphics below or visit NJFamilycare.org.



Doula coverage is part of
NJFAMILYCARE

Doula care is associated with better birth outcomes.

For more information, visit
www.njfamilycare.org



NJFAMILYCARE

**365 Days of
Postpartum Coverage**

Visit NJFamilyCare.org



**Healthy.
Secure.
Supported.**

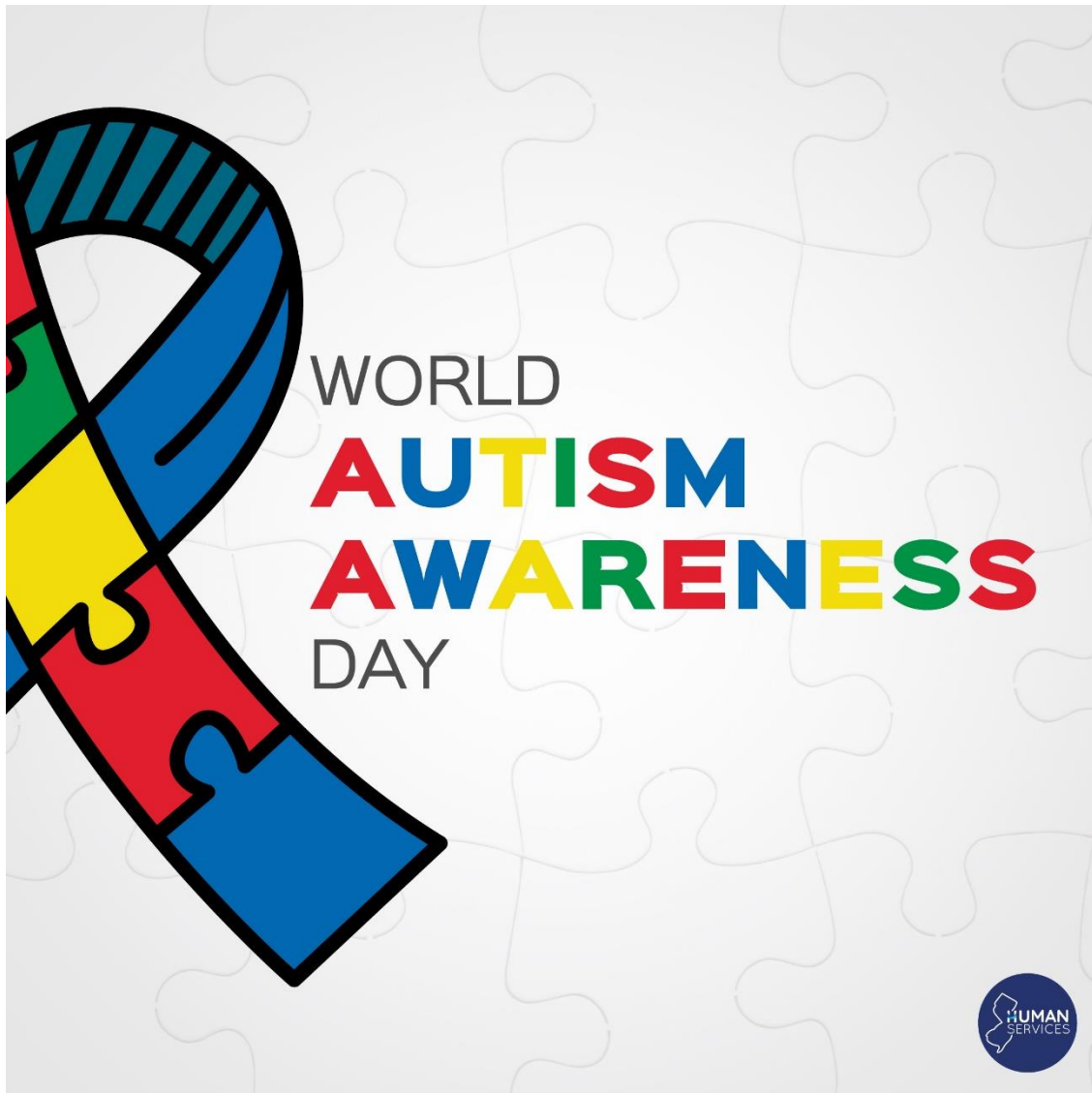
NURTURE NJ



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



World Autism Awareness Day

An internationally recognized day on April 2nd every year which helps to raise awareness about people with autistic spectrum disorders including autism and Asperger syndrome throughout the world.

The [Office on Autism \(OOA\)](#) provides a centralized place to address issues associated with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) within the [Division of Developmental Disabilities \(DDD\)](#).



APRIL IS
PARKINSON'S
AWARENESS
MONTH



Parkinson's Awareness Month

April is Parkinson's Awareness Month. For resources and support, visit the
Parkinson's Foundation at www.parkinson.org.

Or for more information on how to help older adults remain safe and
independent in the community, contact your local
[Area Agency on Aging](#) at **1-877-222-3737**.

APRIL IS

ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH



Alcohol Awareness Month

Addiction help is available.

ATLAS® is a free, online tool available to

New Jersey residents interested in finding trustworthy addiction treatment.

Take a confidential assessment and find quality providers in your area today:

Visit TreatmentATLAS.org



April is Able to Save Month!

Check out our video with [Division of Disability Services](#) Executive Director Peri Nearon for more info about how NJ Able accounts allow individuals with disabilities the ability to save money tax-free.

And visit [HERE](#) to see how you can begin to save with NJ Able today!

Governor Proclamations for April

Click proclamation to enlarge the image.



Inclusive Healthy Communities (IHC)

NJ Human Services gives you a glimpse inside [Atsion Recreation Area](#), with a walking tour which highlights the successful implementation of [Division of Disability Services' Inclusive Health Communities](#) Grant Funding in partnership with with [Pinelands Preservation Alliance](#).

This project creates equal access to these natural resources for people with disabilities.

Are You Deaf or Hard of Hearing and Need Services?



▶ **Emotional Support Videophone Helpline:**
Call 973-870-0677 vp



▶ **ASL Information Regarding COVID-19:**
Visit <https://nj.gov/humanservices/ddhh/coronavirus.shtml>



▶ **Information Regarding Sign Language Interpreters or
Real-Time Captioning:**
Visit <https://nj.gov/humanservices/ddhh/services/caption/>



▶ **Equipment Distribution Program:**
Visit <https://nj.gov/humanservices/ddhh/services/edp/>



▶ **Hearing Aid Programs:**
Visit <https://nj.gov/humanservices/ddhh/services/hearingaid/>



▶ **Language Acquisition Services in ASL for Children Ages 0-5:**
Visit <https://nj.gov/humanservices/ddhh/services/leveling/>



▶ **Deaf and Hard of Hearing Sensitivity Training:**
Visit <https://nj.gov/humanservices/ddhh/education/dst/>

**For more information about our services, call
609-588-2648, 609-498-7019 vp,
or email ddhh.communications2@dhs.nj.gov**



NJ Department of Human Services

Phil Murphy, **Governor** / Tahesha L. Way, **Lt. Governor** / Sarah Adelman, **Commissioner**



Are you deaf or hard of hearing and looking for services?

The [Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#) is here to help! Get linked to:

Sign Language Interpreter, Hearing Aid Programs,
Emotional Support and more.

Check out our website [HERE](#).

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

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