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NEWSLETTER | FALL 2024



**Commissioner Adelman and Senator Vitale Unveil
Comprehensive Package to Enhance Safety and Accountability
in Developmental Disability Services**

Commissioner Sarah Adelman and Senator Joseph Vitale announced a legislative package aimed at enhancing the health and safety of individuals with developmental disabilities.

"These transformative bills represent more than legislative progress; they mark a significant stride in our ongoing commitment to ensure that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities are not only safeguarded but also empowered to thrive within our communities," **Commissioner Adelman said.**

"By enhancing protections and boosting accountability for providers, we underscore our dedication to enabling every person to achieve their full potential and live with the dignity and respect they deserve. I extend my gratitude to Senator Vitale for his efforts and look forward to working collaboratively as these vital initiatives advance. Together, we share a unified goal: a promise to protect and support every individual."

"I'm excited to spearhead this comprehensive package of reforms to improve the services provided to our residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities, both by service providers and by the Department," **Senator Vitale said.** "Our shared commitment is that every individual with intellectual and developmental disabilities lives in a safe and supportive environment. By implementing these measures, we are safeguarding the rights of individuals and ensuring they can thrive and fully participate in communities across New Jersey."

The package includes bills that:

- Enhance state enforcement authority and establish financial penalties;
- Establish new provider governance and service standards;

- Require directors of medical services to enhance investigations of abuse and neglect involving individuals with complex medical needs;
- Create a Disability Mortality and Abuse Prevention Advisory Committee;
- Establish a system for receiver appointment;
- Streamline investigations; and
- Require workforce survey participation.

“Human Services is continuously committed to fostering a safe and dignified environment for individuals with developmental disabilities,” **Commissioner Adelman said**. “This legislative package not only enhances accountability among service providers but also amplifies the voices of those with lived experience in shaping the services they receive.”

Read more [HERE](#).



Governor Murphy Announces Over \$25 Million in Additional Opioid Response Investments

Governor Phil Murphy announced the allocation of more than \$25 million from New Jersey's Opioid Recovery and Remediation Fund to support additional efforts tackling the opioid crisis, including expanding legal services for those in recovery, enhancing youth substance use treatment and prevention, and boosting emergency response efforts. The newly allocated funding builds upon more than \$95 million in opioid settlement spending [announced](#) earlier this year.

"While our collective battle against the overdose epidemic is far from over, we have made tremendous progress in expanding evidence-based care and community-informed support to more New Jerseyans. With today's announcement, we are reaffirming our commitment to support both individuals and communities that continue to face the tragic impacts of the overdose crisis," **said Governor Murphy**. "By leveraging the State's Opioid Recovery and Remediation Fund, we are expanding programs with a proven success record to more New Jersey communities over the next three years and bolstering our preparedness to respond to new opioid-related public health challenges. These crucial investments will save lives and help our neighbors struggling with addiction, wherever they are on their journey to recovery."

Based on the recommendation of the State's Opioid Recovery and Remediation Advisory Council, the newly allocated funding will provide:

- **\$20.25 million over three years to expand efforts to provide free civil legal services** to individuals with mental health or substance use disorders. This funding will reduce the burden of outstanding legal issues on an individual's pursuit of wellness, recovery, and community

integration. The Department of Human Services would implement two models: a medical-legal partnership model that helps with treatment and a regional legal services model for broader assistance.

- **\$5.04 million over three years to expand statewide the Department of Children and Families' South Jersey Youth Substance Use Initiative**, which helps youth ages 13 through 17 years access substance use treatment and care services. The expansion will make outpatient, intensive outpatient, and short-term residential treatment programs more accessible statewide, and offer early intervention services for youth who are engaging in substance use and may be at risk for dependence. Services, including family treatment, will be designed to provide support for youth as well as their parents and caregivers.
- **\$500,000 to boost the State's ability to swiftly and effectively respond to emergencies**. This replenishes \$500,000 held for opioid emergency response to bolster the State's ability to swiftly and effectively respond to emergencies in the opioid crisis as they emerge. Emergency funds were used over the past year to deploy wound care supplies, hygiene kits, and xylazine testing supplies to address the emerging threat in the drug supply of fentanyl adulterated or associated with xylazine.

"This funding reflects our continued and unwavering commitment to support individuals and families impacted by the harms of the opioid crisis," **said Commissioner Sarah Adelman**, who chairs the [Opioid Recovery and Remediation Advisory Council](#). "By investing \$25 million in settlement funds to expand legal services, enhance youth treatment and prevention programs, and strengthen emergency response capabilities, we are not only responding to immediate challenges but paving the way for long-term recovery and resilience."

I thank my fellow Advisory Council members and all of the community members and partners who provided input to guide these recommendations.”

For more on these programs, please read the full report [HERE](#).



NJ Human Services Awards Contracts to Opioid Treatment Providers to Expand Access to Mobile Medication Services

Human Services announced that \$3.2 million in contracts have been awarded to provide mobile medication services to individuals with substance use disorder (SUD) who may encounter obstacles to receiving services at traditional ‘brick-and-mortar’ treatment agencies.

The expansion is funded through the allocation of New Jersey’s opioid settlement funds [announced by Governor Murphy in February 2024](#).

“The goal is to eliminate barriers to treatment and save lives by meeting people right where they are. These funds, which are opioid settlement dollars in action, will target underserved areas and expand access to treatment options and other services and supports to those who need it most,” **said Commissioner Sarah Adelman.**

Mobile medication services are expected to begin in 2025. Three awards were issued, one in each of the following counties; Monmouth, Middlesex, and Burlington. These new mobile vans will run in addition to the eight that currently operate in New Jersey. This expansion will enable mobile medication services to be available in the above-mentioned counties, as well as Ocean.

“Hard-to-reach populations are not likely to access traditional health care and social services on their own due to a number of barriers including mental illness, unstable housing, or lack of transportation. Stigma and lack of trust also keep people from seeking out services. Mobile vans can go where help is needed and connect people to treatment and services that will hopefully lead to long-term recovery,” **said Deputy Commissioner of Health Services Valerie Mielke.**

“We know that people who are facing instability in their lives will seek treatment more readily when services are brought to them. These mobile units can help us reach individuals most in need of these services in multiple neighborhoods.

They can also help build trust by becoming a recognizable and helpful presence in the community,” **said Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) Assistant Commissioner Renee Burawski.**

Providers must develop a plan to publicize the route and schedule to the communities being served. They must also partner with other DMHAS-funded initiatives designed to increase access to medications for substance use disorder to the targeted population.

Read more [HERE](#).



NEED HELP WITH CHILD CARE?

New Jersey's child care assistance program helps eligible families pay for child care costs, find available child care options and more.

Visit **www.childcarenj.gov** to learn more.

Governor Murphy Highlights More Than \$1 Billion Investment in Child Care Sector Since Start of Administration

Governor Phil Murphy highlighted how his Administration has invested more than \$1 billion in expanding access to high-quality, affordable child care. The Governor also announced an additional \$17 million in funding for the [New Jersey Economic Development Authority \(NJEDA\) Child Care Facilities Improvement Program](#).

“Affordable, exceptional child care is a vital part of a stronger and fairer New

Jersey economy, and the increased funding announced today will strengthen our state's economic security and provide equitable opportunities to working parents," **Governor Murphy said.** "Increased access to high-quality child care allows more parents to return to the workforce, bolstering New Jersey's economic growth and competitiveness. Thank you to the Biden-Harris Administration, who have provided record-high federal funding to expand access to child care, health care, and other critical resources for families in the Garden State."

"Reliable and high-quality child care services are critical to the growth and success of New Jersey's economy; however, too often financially stretched child care providers forgo making necessary investments in facility upgrades," **NJEDA Chief Executive Officer Tim Sullivan said.** "The Child Care Facilities Improvement Program is an essential part of Governor Murphy's goal to support working families and to build a more inclusive economy."

"This investment continues the Murphy Administration's commitment to support quality child care providers that are vital to New Jersey's working families and the state economy. Today's announcement complements \$3.6 million in Fiscal Year 2025 child care provider wage increases and Human Services' Child Care Assistance Program subsidies for tens of thousands of New Jersey families," **Commissioner Sarah Adelman said.** "With a focus on improving learning environments, these NJEDA grants will empower child care providers to make necessary enhancements to their facilities, expand access to high-quality child care services, and strengthen our early childhood education system."

Read more [HERE](#).

NEW JERSEY HUMAN SERVICES



Division of Developmental Disabilities

NJ Human Services Awards Contract for Crisis Prevention & Intervention Team Serving Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health Needs

Commissioner Sarah Adelman announced Human Services has awarded a contract to develop evidence-based, community crisis prevention and intervention services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and mental health needs.

Human Services' [Division of Developmental Disabilities](#) (DDD) awarded a \$3.2 million in contract to create a new START Model program. The contract was awarded to the Young Adult Institute, or YAI. The program is projected to begin in spring 2025. The program will be active in Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean, and Salem counties.

START – which stands for Systemic, Therapeutic, Assessment, Resources, and Treatment – provides community-based crisis prevention and

intervention services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and mental health needs. This model will expand community capacity to provide an integrated response to adults at risk of or experiencing a behavioral health crisis, their families, and those who support them, and to foster cross-systems relationships that support the health and wellbeing of each person served. The program focuses on reducing emergency room visits, hospitals admissions, caregiver burnout, and calls to law enforcement as well as building community capacity to successfully support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and mental health needs.

“START is well-regarded for its individualized, solution-oriented methods that utilize positive psychology and other proven practices to address mental health issues, particularly those that are frequently misdiagnosed, under-diagnosed, or overlooked in individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities,” **Commissioner Adelman said.** “This contract award marks another advancement in our efforts to enhance and broaden crisis response services, ensuring top-quality care for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Their safety and quality of life remain our top priorities.”

“This groundbreaking approach will move us closer to our objective of delivering the most thorough services for all adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including those with complex behavioral and mental health needs,” **Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services Kaylee McGuire said.** “By implementing the START model, we are broadening the range of support options to enhance our crisis response and prevention strategies with proven, effective methods.”


“We are eager to roll out this program to enhance crisis response for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities,” **DDD Assistant**

Commissioner Jonathan Seifried said.

Read more [HERE](#).





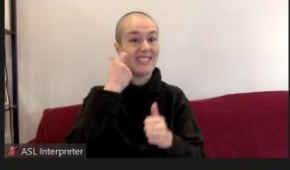
Commissioner Sarah Adelman and Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services Kaylee McGuire toured [Bestwork Industries](#) with CEO Jon Katz and Jacob Kaplen of [ACCSES NJ](#) to meet staff and learn how they adapt manufacturing work to create jobs for individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

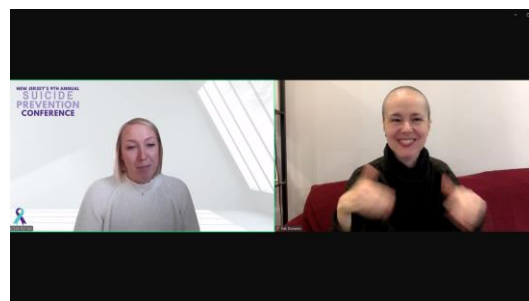


Why People Die By Suicide: A Conceptual and Clinical Update

Thomas Joiner, Ph.D.
The Robert O. Lawton Distinguished Professor of Psychology
Florida State University

joiner@psy.fsu.edu




What is 988?

- 988 is the nationwide 3-digit dialing code for suicide prevention and mental health and/or substance use crisis.
- When you dial or text 988, you will be connected to the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline which is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year.
- You can also chat with 988 at 988lifeline.org/chat
- People can dial 988 if they are worried about a loved one who is in crisis and may need immediate support
- All U.S. states and territories transitioned from the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL) to 988 on July 16, 2022.



There is hope.
CALL | TEXT | CHAT
24/7/365



Mental Health Awareness Trainings

IMPACT
600 Participants trained annually in Adult & Youth MHFA

NO COST TRAININGS

QPR
Question, Persuade, Refer Suicide Prevention Training

Contact Us:
connect@njdhhs.org



Human Services and the [New Jersey Department of Health](#) held the [9th Annual Virtual Suicide Prevention Conference](#).

This year's topic was "**Breaking the Silence: Engaging Communities to Prevent Suicide.**" The conference, featuring speakers from multiple state departments and mental health organizations, offered keynote speakers, breakout sessions and panel discussions that promote access of mental health treatment services and prevent suicide.



Commissioner Sarah Adelman gave welcoming remarks at the Beverly Roberts Memorial Healthcare Symposium, hosted by the [ARC of New Jersey](#). She emphasized how NJ Human Services and healthcare providers can work together to improve care for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



Human Services held its department-wide Breast Cancer Awareness Walk and Pink Out earlier this month! We would like to thank all staff for such amazing participation. Our divisions took lunch breaks to gather, take photos, and walk

in support and in memory of those who battled this disease.

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



To highlight Blindness Awareness Month, the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired led by Executive Director Dr. Bernice Davis held its third

annual Community Outreach Fair at [Cheesequake State Park](#). Activities included a reading of the Governor's Blindness Awareness Month proclamation, exhibits, demonstrations, and a guided nature hike. Kaylee McGuire, Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services, also stopped by and joined in on the fun. To learn more about CBVI's programs and services, visit [HERE](#).



Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services Kaylee McGuire and Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired Assistant Division Director Dr. Charles Pat McKenna joined the [National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey's](#) (NJFBJ) 48th Annual State Convention to discuss how Human Services is making a difference in the lives of blind New Jerseyans. They were joined by NFBNJ President Linda Melendez.

The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired's programs and services are designed to enable consumers to achieve full inclusion and integration in society through success in employment, independent living, and social self-sufficiency. For more info [HERE](#).



To celebrate Disability Employment Awareness Month, Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services Kaylee McGuire and [Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired](#) (CBVI) Assistant Division Director Dr. Charles Pat McKenna participated in CBVI's first ever Dining in the Dark event at the Joseph Kohn Training Center in New Brunswick.

Participants wore sleep shades while eating their lunch and learned to effectively guide others. CBVI's ultimate goal was to remove any hesitation about hiring a blind, deaf-blind, or visually impaired individual and open the eyes of potential employers about the advantages of hiring someone with a disability.

CBVI Business Relations Unit CBVI's Business Relations Unit offers training and education to employers on the benefits of hiring workers who are blind, deaf-blind and visually impaired.

For more info visit [HERE](#).



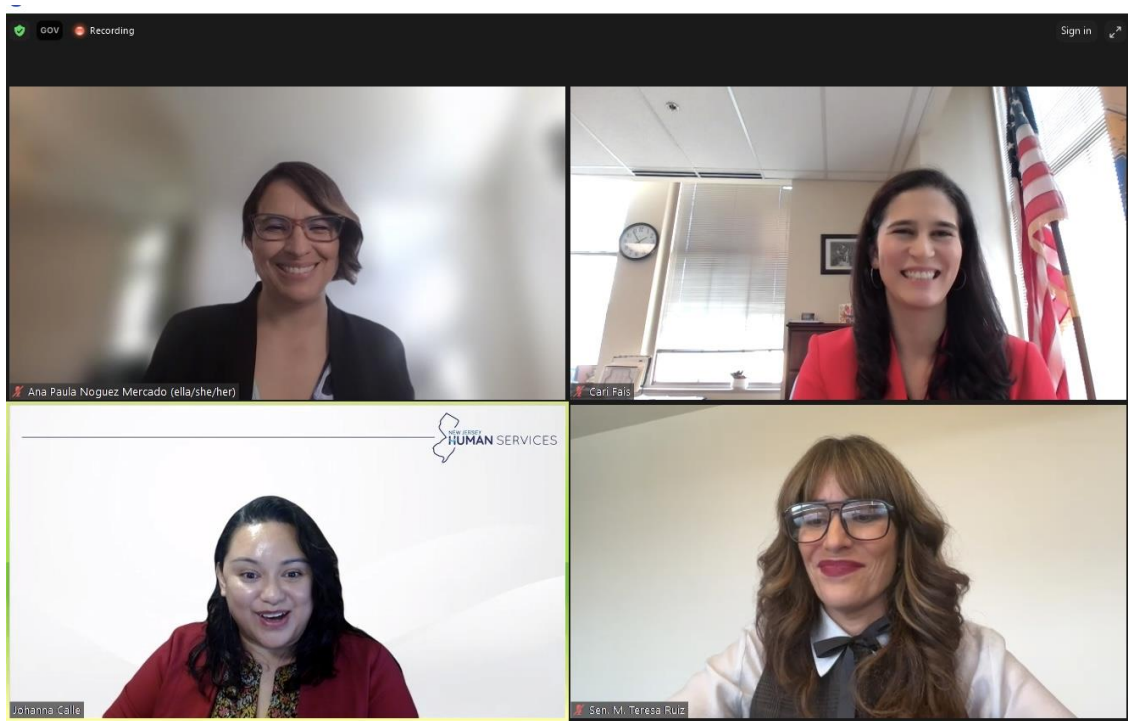
Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services Kaylee McGuire celebrated the beginning of **National Caregiver Month** at the National Caregivers Conference in New Brunswick. A proclamation from Governor

Murphy was presented to Liza Gunderell and Deputy Commissioner McGuire moderated a panel about caregiving policy.



[Office of New Americans](#) Director Johanna Calle joined panelists at the Immigrant Integration Conference hosted by [IACO - Immigration and American Citizenship Organization](#), to discuss how government agencies can support the integration of Hispanic immigrants into American society through collaboration with local organizations community groups and leaders.

The Office of New Americans supports new Americans through outreach and education, and works on priorities to build trust, improve access to social services, workforce development and employment services and legal services for immigrants. Learn more [HERE](#).



[Office of New Americans](#) Director Johanna Calle joined Senator Teresa Ruiz and Ana Paula Noguez Mercado, former Language Access Coordinator, for the U.S. Department of Justice, for a panel discussion on the imperative of language access for government agencies. The event was hosted by the Attorney General's Office in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month. To learn more about the Office of New Americans visit [HERE](#).



Human Services' [Office of Emergency Management](#) participated in the American Red Cross Community Resource Fair at their Tinton Falls facility. Federal, state and county government agencies, as well as non-profit organizations, participated.



Human Services' [Office of Emergency Management](#)'s James Manski was deployed with the NJ All-Hazards Incident Management Team to North Carolina for hurricane response. He was embedded in a [FEMA](#) team that among other tasks helped bring food, water and supplies to hard-hit and remote areas.



Human Services' [Office of Emergency Management](#) provided a Pathways to Preparedness presentation to the Better Tomorrow's Conference. Over 100 attendees from around the Nation received a training overview which is designed to provide disaster preparedness information to those with disabilities, access and functional needs.

For more information on the training please reach out to the Office of Emergency Management at 609-631-4363 or eocesf6@njsp.gov.



Deputy Commissioner for Health Services, Val Mielke promoted the success of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics at the [New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies](#) Conference.

Learn more [HERE](#).





[Adult Protective Services](#) Coordinator Jen Mills and representatives from throughout New Jersey attended the National Adult Protective Services Association Conference in New Mexico. To learn more about Adult Protective Services in the [Division of Aging Services](#), visit [HERE](#).



The [Division of Disability Services](#) Information and Referral staff attended the 2024 Somerset County DisABILITY Services Expo to get the word out regarding DDS' various programs and services.



The [Division of Disability Services](#) is developing a Traumatic Brain Injury State Action Plan with members of the [NJ Advisory Council on Traumatic Brain Injury](#) and the NJ Traumatic Brain Injury Survivor Board.

Learn more how NJ provides supports [HERE](#).



Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services Kaylee McGuire and Division of Disability Services Assistant Director Jacqueline Moskowitz joined the [Division of Disability Services](#) Info and Referral team as they represented at the 22nd Annual [Brain Injury Alliance](#) 5K Run/Walk/Roll for Brain Injury Awareness.



Community Outreach staff joined [Tammy Murphy](#) at the [NurtureNJ Family Festival in Orange](#) where they spoke with festival guests about our division's programs and services. To learn more about the programs and services DHS offers, the largest state agency serving one out of every three children, visit [HERE](#).



Human Services Virtual Budget Listening Session

Tuesday, November 19, 2024 | Noon

All are welcome to offer verbal or written testimony to inform the Department of Human Services budget for 2025-26.

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.

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Sign up [HERE](#) to testify. Sign language and captioning will be provided. Please note any other accommodation requests when signing up.



Governor's Proclamations



Disability Employment Awareness Month



Blindness Awareness Month



Mental Illness Awareness Week

Real Savings. One Application.

**Medicare
Premiums**

**Prescription
Drugs**

**Other Living
Expenses**

NJSave



October was International Day of Older Persons! Older residents and people with disabilities can save money without leaving home! NJSave is an online application that can help you save money on Medicare premiums, prescription costs and other living expenses. Apply today, visit: njsave.org



World Mental Health Day was October 10th. 988 is a direct 24/7 connection to accessible & compassionate support & resources to anyone experiencing psychiatric or emotional distress or those worried about a loved one.

Call/Text 988 or Chat 988lifeline.org



**Now, all children can apply for NJ FamilyCare,
regardless of their immigration status.**



October 7th was Child Health Day!

Children are now eligible for [NJ FamilyCare](#) regardless of immigration status.
Please visit [HERE](#) to learn more and apply for affordable health coverage and
quality care. Or call 1-800-701-0710 (TTY: 711)

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.



October 15th was White Cane Safety Day, also known as Blind Americans Equality Day, a day to educate the world about blindness and that the White Cane is a tool for independent living for people who are blind & visually impaired. CBVI offers independent living training, along with many other services. Visit [HERE](#).



October 10th was World Sight Day! Blindness and vision impairment are major international public health issues. The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired has programs to help consumers achieve full integration in society through success in employment, independent living and more.

For more information, visit [HERE](#).



October was Down Syndrome Awareness Month. 💙💙

Join us in celebrating the abilities of people with Down syndrome and promoting the fact that they are so much more than just their diagnosis.

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

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