



## State of New Jersey

PHILIP D. MURPHY  
*Governor*

NEW JERSEY MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH INNOVATION AUTHORITY  
P. O. Box 101  
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08608-0101

TAHESHA L. WAY  
*Lt. Governor*

Lisa A. Asare  
*President & CEO*

### Maternal Care Quality Collaborative May 30, 2025

Register in advance for this meeting:

[https://www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN\\_wXaGbuIRQFu1bv3Q9VXp0g](https://www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_wXaGbuIRQFu1bv3Q9VXp0g)

- I. Call to Order
- II. Open Public Meetings Act Statement
- III. Roll Call
- IV. Update from Chair
  - a. MCQC Workgroup Updates
- V. DCF Presentation on Nurse Home Visiting
- VI. Matters Requiring Board Action
  - a. Approval of minutes of February 28, 2025
  - b. Vote for Vice Chair
- VII. Executive Session (If required)
- VIII. Public Comment
- IX. Other Business
- X. Meeting Adjournment



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### NEW JERSEY MATERNAL CARE QUALITY COLLABORATIVE BOARD MEETING

#### Minutes of the Meeting February 28, 2025

Minutes of the meeting of the New Jersey Maternal Care Quality Collaborative ("MCQC") held virtually on Friday, February 28, 2025, at 10:00 AM Eastern Standard Time.

#### MEMBERS OF THE BOARD IN ATTENDANCE

Amanda Medina Forrester – Governor Representative  
Cari Fais – Governor Representative  
Catherine Bennet – Public Member  
Chanelle Andrews – Public Member  
Erica Pulliam – Public Member  
Helen Hannigan – Public Member  
Hetal Patel – Public Member  
James Darley – Public Member  
Jaye Madden-Wilson – Public Member  
Julie Blumenfeld – Public Member  
Kelly Anderson-Thomas – Public Member  
Kimberly Birdsall – Public Member  
Liliana Morales – Public Member  
Linda Schwimmer – Public Member  
Lisa Gitten-Williams – Public Member  
Mariekarl Vilceus-Talty – Public Member  
Mehnaz Mustafa – Governor Representative  
Michelle Gabriel-Caldwell – Governor Representative  
Myriam Mondestein – Public Member  
Natassia Harris – Public Member  
Natasha Dravid - Public Member  
Robyn D'Oria – Public Member  
Rose-Ann Uwague – Public Member  
Shital Patel – Public Member  
Suzanne Sernal- Public Member  
Tonique Griffin – Public Member  
Lisa Asare – Governor Representative

#### ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES

Lauren Lalicon, Policy Director, Office of the First Lady

Roza Dabaghyan, Deputy Attorney General, Department of Law and Public Safety, Division of Law

Michael Eleneski, Associate Counsel, Office of the Governor, Authorities Unit  
Laura Wilton, Chief of Corporate Governance, New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority

Catherine Terrero, New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority

Cindy Cortez, New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority

Sofia Bonsignore, New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority

Chair Lisa Asare presided over the meeting with Catherine Terrero and Cindy Cortez, keeping the minutes.

Chair Asare called the meeting to order and announced that Maternal Care Quality Collaborative (MCQC) was in compliance with the provisions of Open Public Meetings Act and the adequate notice of the meeting had been provided in the manner prescribed by law.

Chair Asare took roll call and welcomed representatives from the First Lady's Office, Governor's Authorities Unit, Office of the Attorney General, Department of Health & Department of Human Services, and the Department of Treasury. Note: Kelly Anderson-Thomas and Julie Blumenfeld missed roll call but later joined the meeting.

### **Chair update**

Chair Asare addressed the Board and shared that MIHIA had surveyed MCQC members regarding working group assignments that correspond with the five MIHIA pillars. Chair Asare provided the survey results and presented a high-level overview of the working groups, their assignments, and next meeting dates.

Chair Asare welcomed Carly Slutzky, from the Department of Health, who provided the Board with an update on the MCQC's role in the Maternal Health Innovation grant. Additionally, Shin-Yi Lin and her team from the Department of Human Services (DHS), State Medicaid Office, presented on the new Transforming Maternal Health grant (TMaH). DHS is eager to receive feedback from the MCQC Board to better inform New Jersey's implementation of the TMaH model. Board members highlighted the need to focus on areas such as: preeclampsia, hypertension disorders, and quality postpartum care.

### **Matters Requiring Board Action**

#### **a. Approval of November 22, 2024, Meeting Minutes.**

A motion was made by Helen Hannigan to approve the meeting minutes from November 22, 2024. Cathleen Bennet seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. The motion carried.

**b. Vice Chair Nominations.**

A motion was made by Suzanne Sernal to nominate Helen Hannigan as Vice Chair. Linda Schwimmer seconded the motion. Another motion was made by Tonique Griffen to nominate Michelle Gabriel-Caldwell as Vice Chair. Jaye Wilson seconded the motion.

During discussion, a motion was made by Kelly Anderson to table the vote until the next meeting to provide enough time to review the resumes and qualifications of the two nominees. Tonique Griffin seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The motion carried.

**Other Business**

Jaye Wilson asked if there was an update on what the Maternal and Infant Health Innovative Authority was planning for Black Maternal Health Week. Chair Asare responded that there is no update at this time.

**Public Comment**

Linda Schwimmer shared that the NJ Health Care Quality Institute will be hosting a virtual preeclampsia awareness event on April 2, 12-2PM.

**Executive Session**

There was no Executive Session.

**Adjournment**

Chair Asare requested a motion to adjourn. Helen Hannigan made the motion to adjourn. Dr. Lisa Gittens-Williams seconded the motion.

I hereby certify this to be a true and original copy of the February 28, 2025, New Jersey Maternal Care Quality Collaborative Board meeting minutes.

*Lisa Asare*

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Lisa Asare,  
President and CEO.

**Helen Hannigan, MGA**  
**President & CEO, The Cooperative | President & CEO, Family Health Initiatives**

Helen Hannigan is a respected leader and experienced voice in the maternal and child health space, recognized across New Jersey as an expert in the implementation of collaborative, evidence-based practices, data optimization, quality improvement and stakeholder engagement.

As President & CEO of The Cooperative (*Southern New Jersey Perinatal Cooperative*), the state-licensed maternal and child health consortium which coordinates and supports maternal/fetal and newborn care across Southern New Jersey, Hannigan oversees robust initiatives to improve maternal and child health services and outcomes in Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Salem Counties, and beyond.

In addition to her executive leadership role at The Cooperative, Hannigan simultaneously serves as President & CEO of The Cooperative's subsidiary, Family Health Initiatives (FHI), a New Jersey-based leader in data collection, management and analysis for hospitals, nonprofits and government agencies.

Through these agencies, Hannigan, who oversees multimillion dollar budgets and leads a team of more than 200 professionals, including clinical staff, is adept at grant writing and leading strategic partnerships. Hannigan's work has earned a place of prominence among key decision-makers, influencing legislation and shaping policy.

Motivated by a lifelong commitment to social justice, public health and equitable healthcare access for all, Hannigan is, a CAPPA-trained Doula, and a staunch advocate for doula services for all, expanded family leave to care for children after birth or adoption and paid family leave.

Prior to her tenure as President & CEO, Hannigan served as The Cooperative's Director of Management Information Systems & Administration and Family Health Initiatives' Chief Operating Officer. In these roles, she directed data management and analysis activities for regional birth facilities, supported birth facility staff with electronic birth certificate completion, and supported state vital statistics and epidemiology staff in data collection at regional hospitals and birth facilities. Hannigan spearheaded and advanced the adoption of New Jersey's Perinatal Risk Assessment (PRA), a universal screening form used to identify clinical and social factors that impact pregnancy. The PRA is a statewide requirement for all NJ Family Care and uninsured pregnant patients and serves to ensure these vulnerable patients are linked to available services where they live.

**Associations and Memberships:**

- **New Jersey Maternal Care Quality Collaborative** (NJMCQC), Chair (December 2023-June 2024)
- **The American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists** (ACOG) Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health (AIM) Initiative, Co-Chair, Opioid Bundle Metrics Committee (2018-2019)
- **Camden Coalition**, Board Member / Co-Chair, HIE Oversight Committee (2020-2021)
- **Prematurity Prevention Initiative** Leadership Committee, Staff Coordinator & Member (2018-present)
- **American Public Health Association of Maternal Child Health Programs** (AMCHP), Member and presenter
- **Childbirth and Postpartum Professional Association** (CAPPA)-trained Labor Doula (2023)
- **New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute** (NJHCQI), Member
- **League of Women Voters**, Member
- **March of Dimes**, Executive Leadership Team member, Salute to Women of Achievement

**Education:**

- **University of Pennsylvania**, Philadelphia PA, Master of Government Administration
- **Saint Joseph's University**, Philadelphia PA, Bachelor of Science, Sociology



**Michelle Gabriel-Caldwell, PhD, CD, CBE, DFB**

Michelle Gabriel-Caldwell is a **visionary leader** with over 20 years of experience as a birth doula, childbirth educator, and chemical engineer. She is the founder and owner of **Baby, Please Birth Services Agency LLC™**, a leading maternal support agency serving NJ, NY, PA, MD, FL, and GA, with a team of over 20 doulas. Michelle is **thrice certified** as a Birth Doula with Bradley, NBDA, and DONA, in addition to holding certifications as a Fertility Doula and Postpartum Doula with NBDA. She is also a **Certified Childbirth Educator**, teaching the Bradley Method® and her own **BPBS Holistic Childbirth Course** at **The Birth Center of NJ**, where she serves as the **Doula Director** and **Board Member**. Her dedication to breastfeeding support is evident through her certification as a **Lactation Educator with CAPP**. Extending her passion for movement in birth, Michelle is also a **certified instructor for Dancing for Birth®**.

Beyond direct birth work, Michelle is a **National Black Doula Association (NBDA)® Licensed Doula Instructor and Doula Mentor**. She is a **Poppy Seed Health Advocate and Anti-Racism Instructor**, and **Board Chairperson of The Perinatal Health Equity Initiative**. Her passion for advocacy has led her to educate **over 350 birth professionals** as an **Evidence Based Birth® Instructor** and empower **over 2,300 families** through childbirth education. She has also published research on the **imperative of childbirth education**, further strengthening her impact in the field. Additionally, Michelle **co-wrote the New York Bill for Ava's Law**, advocating for greater protections and support for birthing individuals.

Her birth justice and advocacy work has been highlighted in major media outlets, including:

- **The New York Times:** *Why Black Women Are Rejecting Hospitals in Search of Better Births* (June 2021)
- **Netflix Documentary:** *Sex, Explained* (January 2020)
- **Jezebel:** *What to Expect When You're Expecting During a Pandemic* (April 2020)
- **Every Mother Counts:** *Choices in Childbirth, Support Chapter* (January 2022)
- **PATCH:** *5 Stigmas Pregnant Black Women Face* (February 2020)

In 2024, Michelle testified before the **NJ Assembly Aging and Human Services Committee** on the role of **birth centers in reducing maternal health disparities**, advocating for state funding, insurance parity, and addressing systemic bias in hospital escalation models. She continues to expand her advocacy presentations, incorporating impactful storytelling and actionable solutions for change.

Alongside her contributions to the birth world, Michelle is an accomplished **chemical engineer and strategic leader**. She has been with **BYK® USA LLC** for over 24 years and currently serves as **Regional Key Account Manager for North America and Senior Technical Representative for Quebec Province, Canada and Northeast USA**. Previously, she held roles as **North American Applied Technology Specialist for Wetting & Dispersing Additives** and **End Use Specialist for Powder Coatings**. Her coatings career began at **Benjamin Moore** in 1992, where she advanced from **Analytical Chemist to Product Development Chemist** specializing in specialty solvent-borne coatings and stains.

Michelle is also a **Technical Writer for Elsevier - Focus on Surfactants publication**, where she contributes her expertise to advancing scientific knowledge in the field.

Michelle holds degrees in **Chemistry (ACS), Chemical Engineering, and Public Health**. She is a proud **wife of 27 years** and **mother of two** children, both born through **low-risk, low-intervention births**, including one at home. She seamlessly integrates her scientific expertise with compassionate care, bridging the gap between **evidence-based science and holistic birth support** to empower families and improve maternity care outcomes.