



State of New Jersey

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Governor

NEW JERSEY MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH INNOVATION AUTHORITY
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Lisa A. Asare
President & CEO

NEW JERSEY MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH INNOVATION AUTHORITY BOARD MEETING

Minutes of the Meeting June 25, 2025

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority (MIHIA) held on Wednesday, June 25, 2025, at 10:00 AM Daylight Savings Time.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD IN ATTENDANCE

Ex-officio Members

Jeff Brown, Acting Commissioner of Health, MIHIA Vice-Chair

Tara Colton, representing CEO of NJEDA

Sarah Adelman, Commissioner of Human Services

Dawn Thomas, representing Commissioner of Banking and Insurance

Katherine Stoehr, representing Commissioner of Children and Families

Dr. Tamika Quick, representing Secretary of Higher Education

Holly Low, representing Commissioner of Labor

Public Members

Barbara George Johnson, Chair of NJMIHIA

Andrea Martinez-Mejia

Dr. Damali Campbell-Oparaji ¹

Shakira Abdul-Ali

Maritza Raimundi-Petroski

Dr. Philip Bonaparte

Rosalee Boyer

¹ Dr. Damali Campbell-Oparaji missed the roll call but joined the meeting prior to the consideration of matters requiring action.

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES

Lisa Asare, President & CEO, New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority
Stephanie Lagos, Chief of Staff, Office of the First Lady
Lauren Lalicon, Policy Director, Office of the First Lady
Michael Eleneski, Associate Counsel, Office of the Governor, Authorities Unit
Roza Dabaghyan, Deputy Attorney General, Department of Law and Public Safety, Division of Law
Laura Wilton, Chief of Corporate Governance, NJ Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority
Maria Del Cid-Kosso, Director of Policy and External Affairs, NJ Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority
Catherine Terrero, Executive Assistant, NJ Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority
Cindy Cortez, Administrative Assistant, NJ Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority
Pamela Taylor, Senior Advisor, NJ Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority
Sofia Bonsignore, Governor's Fellow, NJ Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority

Chair Barbara George Johnson presided over the meeting with Cindy Cortez keeping the minutes.

President & CEO Asare called the meeting to order and announced that the Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority (MIHIA) was in compliance with the provisions of Open Public Meetings Act and that adequate notice of the meeting had been provided in the manner prescribed by law.

President & CEO Asare took roll call and welcomed representatives from the First Lady's Office, Governor's Authorities Unit, the Attorney General's Office, and the Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS).

Chair update

Chair Barbara George Johnson addressed the Board and advised that the next Maternal Care Quality Collaborative (MCQC) meeting will be held on August 15, 2025.

Chair George Johnson welcomed MIHIA's new Vice-Chair, Department of Health (DOH) Acting Commissioner Jeff Brown. Vice-Chair Brown addressed the Board, reaffirming the DOH's strong commitment to maternal and infant health, including the development of the MIHIA Model of Care and support for the perinatal workforce through the NJ Doula Learning Collaborative (NJDLC). He expressed enthusiasm for advancing this important work in partnership with the Board.

President & CEO Statement

President & CEO Asare addressed the Board, welcoming MIHIA's new Vice-Chair, Acting Commissioner Jeff Brown, along with MIHIA's newest team member, Maria Del Cid-Kosso, Director of External Affairs and Policy. Maria shared brief remarks, expressing her

enthusiasm for collaborating with the Board and leveraging their expertise to advance policies that make New Jersey a safer and more equitable state for Black and Brown mothers to give birth.

President & CEO Asare provided the Board with updates on several key initiatives, including MIHIA's recent community engagement efforts, the upcoming July groundbreaking of the Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center, progress on the development of a New Jersey-specific doula curriculum, and the state's advancements in expanding access to paid family leave. She also highlighted the ongoing work of the Maternal Care Quality Collaborative (MCQC), noting that work group recommendations will soon be submitted to the Board for review.

President & CEO Asare also shared findings from two newly released reports by the Rutgers School of Public Health: "*Progress in Reducing the Low-Risk Cesarean Birth Rate in NJ (2016–2023)*" and "*Following the Science*," which analyzes more than 70 maternal health policies enacted during the Murphy Administration.

During the discussion, Public Member Dr. Campbell-Oparaji noted that not all Nulliparous, Term, Singleton, Vertex (NTSV) births are inherently low-risk and expressed concern that frontline clinicians are often left managing the consequences of incomplete public understanding. In response, President & CEO Asare suggested that the MCQC Clinical Work Group consider developing a public messaging strategy to address misconceptions surrounding cesarean births.

Lastly, President & CEO Asare shared that MIHIA has engaged the Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) to support the development of its strategic plan. CHCS is a national nonprofit with 30+ years of experience advancing health equity and Medicaid innovation. President & CEO Asare invited Kamala Allen, CHCS Vice President, to present to the Board.

Kamala Allen presented to the Board and provided a brief overview of its role in supporting NJMIHIA's strategic planning process. As NJMIHIA continues to evolve as a start-up entity, it also carries the responsibility of sustaining the mission of Nurture NJ. While there has already been significant activity and impact, CHCS emphasized the importance of a structured strategic process, centered on four key pillars: alignment, activation, accountability, and assessment of progress and impact.

Kamala also highlighted the importance of cross-sector collaboration in driving innovation and supporting NJMIHIA's continued development. As a strategic partner, CHCS will offer organizational development support to ensure the successful execution of NJMIHIA's strategic plan. The process will be co-designed and co-developed in partnership with NJMIHIA leadership and stakeholders.

During the discussion, Public Member Shakira Abdul-Ali inquired about the various planning teams that will be engaged in the strategic planning process and requested examples of similar projects previously completed by CHCS. Public Member Andrea Martinez-Mejia expressed her appreciation and enthusiasm for MIHIA's dedication to

establishing a strong and sustainable Authority. Holly Low, representing Commissioner of Labor, inquired about the status of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and how community voices will be incorporated into the strategic planning process. President & CEO Asare responded that, while the CAC has not yet been formally established, MIHIA plans to partner with the Watson Institute to ensure meaningful engagement with Trenton families throughout the process.

Matters Requiring Board Action

a. Approval of Minutes of March 26, 2025.

A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes of March 26, 2025, by Public Member, Shakira Abdul-Ali, and was seconded by Public Member, Andrea Martinez-Mejia. Vice-Chair Jeff Brown abstained. Remaining members voted in favor. The motion carried.

b. Approval of Resolution Authorizing the Approval of Memorandum of Understanding between NJEDA and NJMIHIA for the Development of the MIHIC.

A motion was made to approve the Board meeting dates by Public Member, Dr. Philip Bonaparte, and was seconded by Vice-Chair Jeff Brown. All members voted in favor. The motion carried.

Executive Session

There was no Executive Session.

Public Comment

There was no Public Comment.

Other Business

There was no Other Business.

Adjournment

Chair Barbara George Johnson requested a motion to adjourn. Public Member, Andrea Martinez-Mejia made the motion to adjourn. Public Member, Shakira Abdul-Ali, seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

I hereby certify this to be a true and original copy of the June 25, 2025, New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority Board meeting minutes.

Lisa Asare

Lisa Asare,
President and CEO