



State of New Jersey

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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 October 22, 2025

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority (NJMIHIA) held on Wednesday, October 22, 2025, at 10:00 AM Daylight Savings Time.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD IN ATTENDANCE

Ex-officio Members

Thalia Sirjue, representing Acting Commissioner of Health

Tara Colton, representing CEO of NJEDA

Dawn Thomas, representing Commissioner of Banking and Insurance

Christine Norbut Beyer, Commissioner of Children and Families ¹

Angela Bethea, representing Secretary of Higher Education

Public Members

Andrea Martinez-Mejia

Barbara George-Johnson ¹

Shakira Abdul-Ali

Maritza Raimundi-Petroski

Dr. Damali Campbell-Oparaji ¹

Rosalee Boyer

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES

Lisa Asare, President & CEO, New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority
Roza Dabaghyan, Deputy Attorney General, Department of Law and Public Safety, Division of Law

¹ Barbara George-Johnson, Commissioner Christine Norbut Beyer, and Dr. Damali Campbell-Oparaji missed the roll call but joined the meeting prior to the consideration of matters requiring action.

Eric Carlsson, Chief Financial Officer, NJ Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority
Laura Wilton, Chief of Corporate Governance, NJ Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority
Mahako Etta, Chief of Innovation, NJ Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority
Catherine Terrero, Senior Executive Assistant, NJ Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority
Cindy Cortez, Administrative Assistant, NJ Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority
Pamela Taylor, MCQC Program Manager, NJ Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority
NJMIHIA Staff

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 the Senator Byron M. Baer 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 Office of the Attorney General, and the Department of Treasury.

Tara Colton, Governor Representative, nominated Thalia Sirjue, Acting Vice Chair to lead the Meeting in place of Vice Chair, Jeff Brown. A motion was made by Public Member, Andrea Martinez-Mejia, and was seconded by Public Member, Maritza Raimundi-Petroski. All members voted in favor. The motion carried.

Acting Vice Chair Thalia Sirjue presided over the meeting with Cindy Cortez keeping the minutes.

Chair update

Acting Vice Chair Sirjue addressed the Board, highlighting that today's agenda would cover updates on NJMIHIA's progress in several key areas, including infrastructure development, partnerships, and program implementation. She also announced new and evolving collaborations, such as the launch of a Community Health Worker (CHW) Pilot led by two of the Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center's (MIHIC) anchor tenants, Capital Health and the Trenton Health Team.

President & CEO Statement

President & CEO Asare updated the Board on the Rutgers School of Public Health's assessment of Nurture NJ's indirect effects. Guided by thematic analysis, the study explored participants' familiarity with Nurture NJ, its organizational and ecosystem impacts, maternal and infant health outcomes, and insights on sustainability and future directions.

The indirect effects found increased public awareness, strengthened cross-sector collaboration, and expanded statewide engagement. The August 2025 report, Ripple Effects, highlights how Nurture NJ is reshaping the state's overall approach to maternal and infant health. President & CEO Asare encouraged everyone to review the report.

President & CEO Asare reported that NJMIHIA is advancing efforts to expand the impact of New Jersey's Paid Family Leave program. Rutgers' evaluation of Nurture NJ showed a 70% statewide increase in use since the 2019 expansion, though access gaps persist among underrepresented and non-English-speaking communities. To address these disparities, NJMIHIA is partnering with the Department of Labor to create multilingual, culturally tailored outreach materials promoting paid family and medical leave for parents, with co-branded content featured on both agencies' websites.

President & CEO Asare also acknowledged the 2025 Nurture NJ Leadership Summit: "United for Change. Centered in Community," that will take place on Wednesday, December 10. Today's agenda includes Board consideration of a resolution authorizing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between NJMIHIA and Department of Children Families (DCF) for the event. With the Board's approval, for the first time, NJMIHIA will co-host the Nurture NJ Leadership Summit in partnership with DCF.

NJMIHIA will also host its first Maternal Health Innovation Roundtable on Monday, November 24, at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Headquarters in Princeton. The roundtable will gather a variety of stakeholders to identify gaps, challenges and opportunities where strategic innovation can further support New Jersey's moms and families.

President & CEO Asare also advised Board members of the upcoming resolution authorizing an Inter-Agency Master Lease between the New Jersey Economic Development Authority and NJMIHIA, allowing NJMIHIA to operate the Center and sublease space to anchor tenants dedicated to improving maternal health. This initiative advances Recommendation 3.3 of the 2021 Nurture NJ Strategic Plan and establishes a statewide hub for maternal and infant health collaboration.

In accordance with State Contract T3067, NJMIHIA issued a \$100,000 mini bid for a Strategic Communications Plan. After a vendor Q&A, deadline extension, and review of four proposals, a vendor was selected to refine key messaging, identify target audiences, and implement strategies to enhance NJMIHIA's visibility and engagement.

Lastly, President & CEO Asare also updated the Board on NJMIHIA's external events. Staff participated in a variety of events such as: HERHealth – The Science of Possibility: Innovation in Fertility, Family Planning & Maternal Health, hosted by the HealthCare Institute of New Jersey; the launch of the Conscious Venture Lab Accelerator Program in Trenton, hosted by the Novella Center for Entrepreneurship; and Congresswoman LaMonica McIver's Women's Meeting.

President & CEO Asare welcomed NJMIHIA MCQC Program Manager, Pamela Taylor, provided updates on the Doula Rubric Assessment, a tool that will enable a pathway for doula training organizations to apply to be included on DHS Approval Training List enabling those organizations' trainees to become NJ Family Care providers. NJMIHIA continues to engage stakeholders and gather feedback prior to the official launch of the assessment.

Pamela also shared that two of the MIHIC's anchor tenants, Trenton Health Team and Capital Health have launched a CHW pilot, designed to bridge clinical care with community-based

support by addressing both medical and social needs during the perinatal period. Insights gained from this pilot will inform the direct service programmatic operations of the MIHIC.

Pamela also informed the Board that the next MCQC meeting is scheduled for November 21, 2025.

President & CEO Lisa Asare opened the floor for questions.

Public member Shakira Abdul-Ali inquired about the date of the Maternal Innovation Roundtable and whether event details are available on the website. President & CEO Lisa Asare shared that the roundtable is scheduled for November 24, 2025, and that invitations to board members will be distributed soon. MCQC Program Manager Pamela Taylor added that key dates related to the doula initiative are publicly available on the NJMIHIA website.

Public Member Andrea Martinez-Mejia commended NJMIHIA's efforts to improve access to Paid Family Leave but emphasized the importance of addressing the needs of non-English-speaking families. She also recommended ensuring that employers are well-informed about the benefit process. Public Member Dr. Damali Campbell-Oparaji echoed this point, highlighting the need to engage healthcare providers, particularly those caring for parents of premature infants who must visit the NICU intermittently.

Chair Barbara George Johnson thanked Martiza for her earlier comment on engaging the doulas across the state. Dr. Campbell-Oparaji also recommended developing a communication plan to guide patients on accessing doulas, particularly as many pilot programs begin to wind down.

Matters Requiring Board Action

a. Approval of Minutes of September 24, 2025.

A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes of September 24, 2025, by Public Member, Rosalee Boyer, and was seconded by Public Member, Shakira Abdul-Ali. Dawn Thomas and Dr. Damali Campbell-Oparaji abstained. Remaining members voted in favor. The motion carried.

b. Approval of Resolution to Authorizing the Approval of an Extension of the Memorandum of Understanding between NJMIHIA and the New Jersey Department of Treasury.

A motion was made to approve the MOU by Chair Barbara George Johnson, and was seconded by Public Member, Dr. Damali Campbell-Oparaji. All members voted in favor. The motion carried.

c. Approval of Resolution to Authorizing the Approval of a Memorandum of Understanding between NJMIHIA and the New Jersey Department of Children and Families to Host the Nurture NJ Summit.

A motion was made to approve the MOU by Public Member, Andrea Martinez-Mejia, and was seconded by Public Member, Rosalee Boyer. Commissioner Christine Norbut Beyer abstained. Remaining members voted in favor. The motion carried.

d. **Approval of Resolution to Authorizing the Approval of Inter-Agency Master Leader between the New Jersey Economic Development Authority and NJMIHIA for Use of the Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center.**

A motion was made to approve the MOU by Chair Barbara George Johnson and was seconded by Public Member, Shakira Abdul-Ali.

During discussion, Shakira inquired about who will determine subtenants for the Innovation Hub and the types of organizations sought for the incubator space. Lisa Asare clarified that NJEDA owns the building while NJMIHIA, as master tenant, will ensure tenants align with its mission. Tara Colton added that some initiatives will focus on social determinants of health, including improving access to resources, service delivery, and support for the doula and perinatal workforce.

Two questions were raised in the chat box: Commissioner Christine Norbut Beyer inquired if individuals with lived experience will be invited to the Maternal Health Innovation Roundtable, and Dr. Campbell-Oparaji inquired if the Board members should expect an invitation. President & CEO Lisa Asare confirmed that individuals with lived experience and community members will be invited to the small gathering, and invitations to Board members are forthcoming.

All members voted in favor. The motion carried.

Executive Session

There was no Executive Session.

Public Comment

There was no Public Comment.

Other Business

Public Member Shakira Abdul-Ali asked about the progress of developing the Community Advisory Committee (CAC). President & CEO Lisa Asare explained that the CAC is in development, and all appointments will be made through the Governor's Office.

Adjournment

Acting Vice Chair Thalia Sirjue requested a motion to adjourn. Chair Barbara George Johnson made the motion to adjourn. Public Member, Andrea Martinez-Mejia, seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

I hereby certify this to be a true and original copy of the October 22, 2025, New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority Board meeting minutes.

Lisa Asare

Lisa Asare,
President and CEO