



**NEW JERSEY HUMAN SERVICES**



NJ HUMAN SERVICES | March-April 2022

## **Sarah Adelman Confirmed as Human Services Commissioner**

The state Senate voted 37-0 on March 24 to confirm Governor Phil Murphy's nomination of Sarah Adelman to be New Jersey Department of Human Services commissioner.

Adelman had been serving as acting commissioner since January 2021. Under her leadership, Human Services has helped residents through the pandemic and invested in child care and food assistance, improved and expanded services for older adults and individuals with disabilities, protected health coverage for NJ FamilyCare members, and continued to enhance mental health and addiction services.

"I'm grateful for the trust Governor Murphy has shown in me to lead New Jersey's largest state department, and I thank the Senate led by Senate President Scutari for its support," Commissioner Adelman said. "I'm humbled by the continued opportunity to lead the New Jersey Department of Human Services and to move us forward. We're going to continue to tackle the opportunities and challenges on behalf of New Jersey residents."

Adelman joined the Department in 2018 as a Deputy Commissioner, overseeing the Division of Developmental Disabilities, Division of Aging Services, and the Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services, which operates the Medicaid/NJ FamilyCare program. She also served on the Board of the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency.

"Each day, we work hard to improve the quality of life of New Jersey's residents," Commissioner Adelman said. "We provide life-transforming services to people who seek help, life-saving assistance to families in need, and life-empowering services for individuals to achieve their full potential. As always, we cannot deliver this important work without the dedicated workforce - inside and outside of our Department - who have continuously tackled new challenges while delivering essential services. I'm look forward to our continued shared commitment to serve others. We have more great work to do."

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# Human Services Partners with KIND to Provide Free Legal Counsel & Social Services Support to Migrant Children & Youth

## The Legal Representation for Children & Youth Program

Providing free legal services to children and youth in immigration proceedings.

Call or text: 201-305-9217 | Email: [uacscreening@NJCIC.org](mailto:uacscreening@NJCIC.org)



Human Services has partnered with Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) to provide free legal counsel and social services coordination to migrant children and youth arriving to New Jersey as unaccompanied minors seeking refuge.

The Legal Representation for Children and Youth Program under the Department's Office of New Americans (ONA) will be administered by [KIND](#), a nationally recognized nongovernmental organization devoted to the protection of unaccompanied and separated children.

"Many of these children and youth lack financial resources to afford legal representation and are in need of legal defense to represent them in immigration court and related agency and state court proceedings as they seek legal status. Providing access to counsel helps ensure due process, increases the likelihood of success in individual cases, and promotes family unity and stability," Commissioner Adelman said.

"KIND applauds the Department of Human Services' landmark creation of this program to fund legal and social services for unaccompanied children and similarly situated youth," KIND President Wendy Young said. "An attorney often means the difference between a child's safety or return to danger. Since 2009, KIND has been dedicated to serving unaccompanied immigrant children in New Jersey communities. We look forward to our partnership with the New Jersey Consortium for Immigrant Children and legal service providers across the state to ensure that immigrant children can access legal representation, healthcare, and other essential services."

"Migrant children and youth arriving to the United States have faced significant trauma fleeing from war, gang violence and abuse. We are glad we can provide expert legal representation at no cost, and provide essential social and emotional service coordination as they adjust to life in our state," Deputy Commissioner Elisa Neira said.

"Unfortunately, immigration legal proceedings do not provide representation to anyone, including children. No child should have to face that process without the proper legal counsel and support. We are grateful for this partnership and look forward to working with KIND to ensure these children have access to professional legal representation, as well as the social services they will need to thrive," ONA Director Johanna Calle said.

[Read more](#)

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



Human Services awarded \$944,000 in total grants to 13 counties to improve communication and language access to county services for deaf and hard of hearing residents.

“We are pleased to offer this grant funding to our county partners and are excited to see the ways they will invest the funds to improve the experiences of deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind residents seeking county services and visiting county offices,” Commissioner Adelman said. “Increasing access to key programs, services and information for deaf and hard of hearing residents is essential. Awarding these grants is another step in our continued work to create a more inclusive New Jersey.”

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

“These grants will promote language and communication access for deaf and hard of hearing residents in various county settings including libraries, health and social services offices through the installation of hearing loops, translation of resources into ASL and the use of ASL interpreters and closed captioning,” Deputy Commissioner Neira said. “Removing communication barriers is vital in improving the quality of life for deaf and hard of hearing New Jerseyans so they can thrive in their communities.”

“It’s important for all New Jerseyans to have equal access, and these grants will enhance language and communication access to county programs and services for our deaf and hard of hearing residents,” Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Executive Director Elizabeth Hill said. “We look forward to seeing the work of the awarded counties come to reality and create a lasting impact in our great state.”

[Read more](#)

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# New Jersey Set to Receive \$641 Million from Settlements with Opioid Distributors and Manufacturers



Governor Phil Murphy and Acting Attorney General Matt Platkin recently announced that New Jersey is set to receive \$641 million from settlements with Johnson & Johnson, which manufactured opioids, and the country's three largest pharmaceutical distributors – McKesson, Cardinal Health, and AmerisourceBergen.

The \$641 million in settlement funds will be paid through 2038 and will fund state and local programs focused on treatment, prevention, and other strategies to combat the opioid epidemic in the state.

“This is a historic moment in our fight to combat the opioid crisis in New Jersey and save lives,” said Governor Murphy. “With these historic funds, we will continue to make critical investments in harm reduction centers, treatment programs, and data-driven strategies to end the overdose crisis. With these funds, coupled with the nearly \$100 million investment in my proposed budget, we will continue our work to combat the opioid crisis in New Jersey.”

“No amount of money could undo the harms that the opioid epidemic has caused to too many New Jerseyans,” said Acting Attorney Platkin. “But these historic settlements will bring hundreds of millions of dollars into our state to support lifesaving drug prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery programs, and will require these drug companies to change their business practices so that this does not happen again. I am proud of the attorneys and investigators in the Department of Law and Public Safety who helped deliver these settlement funds to New Jersey.”

“The opioid settlement will bolster our critical opioid use disorder resources and programs, which will strengthen our ability to save lives by preventing overdose deaths and connecting New Jerseyans to supports and treatment when they need it most,” said Human Services Assistant Commissioner Valerie Mielke, who directs the Department’s Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services. “We are being innovative when it comes to addressing this crisis, from finding ways to close the treatment gap experienced by Black residents through cultural competency training for opioid treatment providers to helping our mental health programs treat individuals with a co-occurring substance use disorder. Our shared goal, always, is to save lives.”

[Read more.](#)

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# Human Services Awards Grants to Create Additional Recovery Centers to Support Individuals with Substance Use Disorders



As part of the state's ongoing response to the opioid crisis, the Department has awarded grants to organizations in nine counties to establish Community Peer Recovery Centers (CPRC). CPRCs provide a safe space where individuals recovering from substance use disorder can receive information about substance use disorder treatment and recovery support services.

Ten counties had already received this funding. The new grants announced expand CPRCs to the following counties: Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Hudson, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean and Somerset.

"Opioid use disorder continues to be a pervasive problem that impacts individuals in the state across all racial, ethnic, age and socio-economic demographics," Commissioner Adelman said. "These recovery centers provide a safe place for individuals in all phases of recovery to gather in support of one another, share experiences, discuss coping skills, and offer each other hope in a community setting. We are glad they will now be available in additional counties to help promote sustained recovery for those that need it, and prevent recurrence of substance use."

"Recovery is an ongoing process. These centers will provide a welcoming and sober space where individuals can receive peer-to-peer support and training, and engage in social, educational and recreational opportunities that can help foster independence, build confidence and allow them to contribute positively to their communities," Assistant Commissioner Mielke said.

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# Human Services Awards Contracts to Help Mental Health Providers Treat Individuals with Co-Occurring Substance Use Disorder

## ***NJ Mental Health Cares***

If you're concerned about your mental health or the mental health of someone you love, **NJ Mental Health Cares** can help. The **free helpline** offers telephone counseling, emotional support, information and assistance.

**866-202-HELP (4357) • TEXT NJHOPE TO 51684**

7 days per week, 8am - 8pm



The Department has awarded contracts to help mental health programs provide medication that can support addiction recovery.

"Improving access to medicines proven to support recovery from addiction is pivotal in our ongoing efforts to make it easier for individuals to access care and receive the treatment they need," Acting Commissioner Adelman said. "Our goal is to remove barriers for treatment such as socioeconomic status, financial challenges, misinformation, language and more. This is another step in our work to combat the opioid epidemic in New Jersey."

The \$300,000 program will be supported through federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's State Opioid Response grant funding. Services are expected to start on June 30.

Funds will be used to ensure providers develop the ability to prescribe and dispense substance use disorder medications buprenorphine, naloxone and naltrexone. This includes recruiting additional medical staff and purchasing medical equipment.

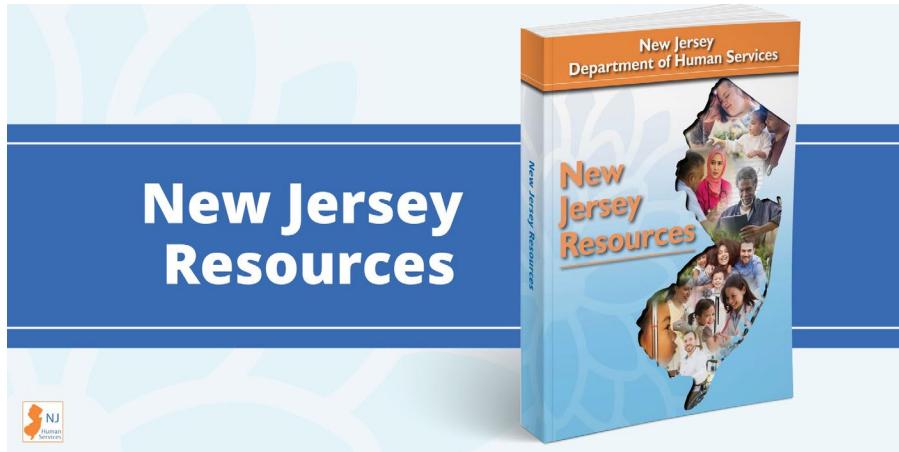
"The use of medications is proven to be effective in treating substance use disorder, especially in mental health treatment settings. It is critical to enhance accessibility of these key supports," Assistant Commissioner Mielke said.

The contracts were awarded to Center for Family Services in Atlantic County and Oaks Integrated Care in Burlington, Camden and Mercer counties.

[Read more](#)

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# New Jersey Resources



Download the latest versions of New Jersey Resources, a comprehensive directory detailing Human Services programs and services.

[English](#) | [Spanish](#)

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## Assistant Commissioner Mielke Honored



Congratulations to Assistant Commissioner Mielke for winning the Partnership Award from the Acenda Institute of Health Innovation.

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## Maternal Health and Innovation Center in Trenton Moves Forward



The Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center in Trenton is moving forward.

The New Jersey Economic Development Authority recently authorized staff to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the John S. Watson Institute of Urban Policy and Research at Kean University to undertake an iterative community engagement process. It also approved additional funding to its real estate services contract to continue the real estate planning for the project.

Human Services is among those partnering in the center's development.

"We are very excited to work with the First Lady and the NJEDA on this innovative new initiative for our capital city," Commissioner Adelman said. "The Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center in Trenton will play a key role in our administration-wide efforts to improve and transform maternal and infant health across New Jersey, especially for women of color. We look forward to partnering to make this Center a reality and working with Trenton's moms to enhance their wellness and the health of their babies."

[Read more](#)

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## Governor Murphy Signs Bill to Extend Prohibition on Utility Shutoffs for Certain Residential Customers





Governor Murphy has signed legislation to extend the prohibition on utility shutoffs for certain residential customers with overdue utility payments who are waiting for a decision on their application for state assistance in paying off their utility bill arrearages.

“Over the past two years, we have implemented critical protections for residential utility customers in our state,” Governor Murphy said. “As New Jersey continues on our road to recovery, we must provide ongoing support to residents who have been financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This legislation will keep the lights on and water running for families who are still making their way through the process of obtaining assistance from our state.”

This law extends protections by requiring local authorities, municipal or public utilities, and rural electric cooperatives to continue providing electric, gas, sewer or water service to residential customers who have submitted an application for utility assistance prior to June 15, 2022 but have not yet received a determination.

Residential customers will be protected for 60 days after initiating a utility assistance application to the applicable state agency, and if they complete their application in this time, will be protected until the state agency makes a decision on the application. The Department of Community Affairs, Department of Human Services, Board of Public Utilities or any other state agency administering a utility assistance program will notify utility service providers of the customers who have applied for an assistance program and are eligible for this grace period while awaiting their application determination.

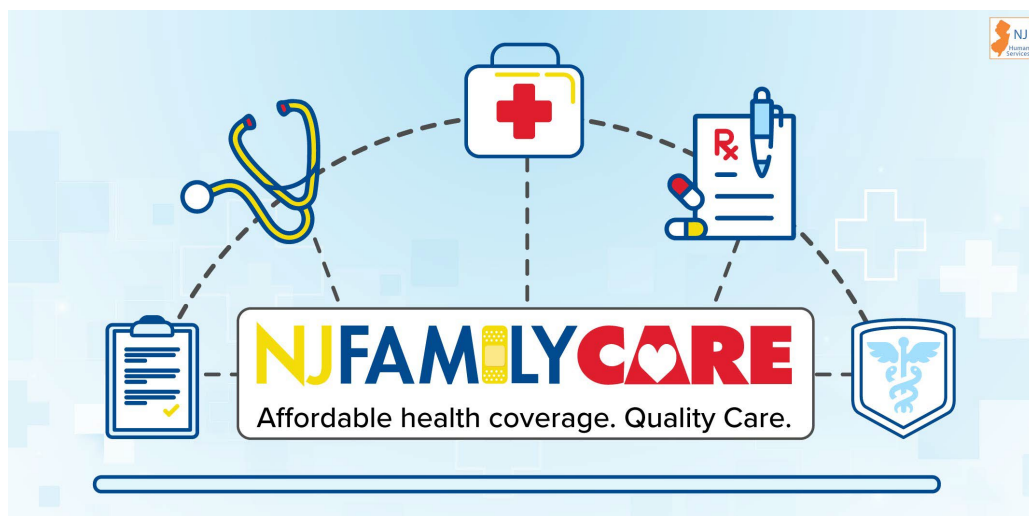
Liens also cannot be placed, sold or enforced on the property of a residential customer for unpaid utility bills while the applicable state agency determines the customer’s application for assistance. Customers will also be eligible for a 12-month interest-free deferred payment plan if they are denied assistance or if the assistance does not cover the full amount of their unpaid bills.

“The prohibition on utility assistance cut-offs has been invaluable to many residents during a challenging time, and while we hope for continued improved conditions, many still need this help,” Commissioner Adelman said. “I thank the Governor for signing this bill and the bill sponsors for advocating for it. It will be immensely helpful to many residents in need.”

[Read more](#)

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## Murphy Administration Releases Plan to Improve Health Care Affordability



The Murphy Administration has released a detailed description of its plan to improve health care affordability in New Jersey through a recently-launched program aimed at addressing rising health care costs.

The Health Care Affordability, Responsibility and Transparency (HART) Program’s plan sets targets for health care leaders to meet in regards to health care costs, in an effort to slow the unsustainable rate of

growth.

“We established the Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency and the HART Program to improve affordability and help curb rising health care costs,” said Governor Phil Murphy. “Through continued collaboration with health care leaders across the state, this critical program aims to make health care more affordable for New Jersey families while promoting a more sustainable health care future for our state.”

“This report presents a vision and a pathway towards a future in which high-quality health care can be more affordable and accessible for all New Jerseyans,” said Governor’s Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency Director Shabnam Salih. “I am proud of this Administration’s commitment to comprehensive health care affordability and the role of my Office in this important work. With the release of this blueprint, we will forge ahead with implementation of these critical next steps in close collaboration with New Jersey’s health care leaders across industry and policy.”

“The health and financial security of New Jersey families are continuously threatened by increasing health care costs,” Commissioner Adelman said. “This blueprint — created by bringing together health care leaders, businesses, and consumers — serves as a guide and our collective commitment to control cost growth, including state costs in our Medicaid program, to ensure more affordable care for New Jersey families.”

[Read more](#)

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## Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month



*Commissioner Adelman joined The Arc of New Jersey on March 22 to mark Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.*

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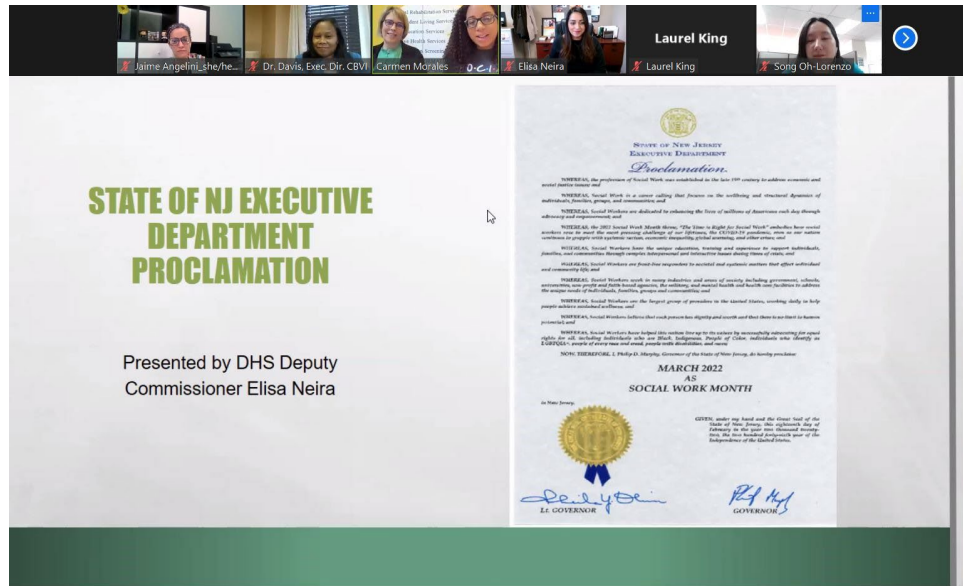
# Autism Awareness Month 2022



Governor Murphy declared April to be Autism Awareness Month in New Jersey. Human Services' Office of Autism helps families with programs and services for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder. For more information, visit [here](#).

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# Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired Honors Social Workers



The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired was joined by Deputy Commissioner Elisa Neira to honor social workers as part of Social Work Month 2022.

## DDHH Executive Director Hill: 'A Big Step Forward for Deaf Representation'



## SPOTLIGHTS ON PROGRAMS



DIVISION OF THE DEAF  
AND HARD OF HEARING

### NJ HEARING AID PROJECT

*Providing free refurbished hearing  
aids for New Jersey residents with  
low incomes.*



NEW JERSEY  
DIVISION  
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