

[Home](#)
[Newsroom](#)
[Media](#)
[Administration](#)
[NJ's Priorities](#)
[Contact Us](#)
[Press Releases](#)
[Public Addresses](#)
[Executive Orders](#)
[Press Kit](#)
[Reports](#)
[Home](#) > [Newsroom](#) > [Press Releases](#) > 2017

## Governor Christie Announces Division Of Mental Health And Addiction Services Reorganization Nearly Complete

Wednesday, November 8, 2017

Tags: [Other](#)

### *Integrated Health Advisory Panel Will Advise in Creation of Integrated System of Care*

**Trenton NJ –** Governor Chris Christie today announced the reorganization of the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) into the Department of Health is nearly complete with creation of an Integrated Health Services branch, engagement of 1,500 community partners and staff, appointment of an Integrated Health Advisory Panel, and relocation of more than 250 DMHAS staff.

"The reorganization was accomplished in 70 days under the leadership of departing Commissioner Cathleen Bennett and teams from the departments of Health and Human Services," Christie said. "Now the focus can shift to creating a system of care that treats physical illness, mental health care, and substance use disorder equally without stigma."

Dr. Arturo Brito, executive director of the Nicholson Foundation and a former deputy commissioner at the Department, said the reorganization may prove to be the most significant achievement for Bennett, who ended her term as Health Commissioner on Wednesday to take a new position in the private sector.

"This is an opportunity to streamline regulations and reimbursement mechanisms to support innovative models of integrating mental health care, substance use disorder treatment, and physical health care," Brito said. "We know that these integrated models best promote patient health and wellness and are cost effective."

Anthony DiFabio, president and CEO of Robin's Nest in Glassboro, said the reorganization "is going to have a transformational and enduring impact on health care in New Jersey. Commissioner Bennett has long recognized that integrating mental health, substance abuse, prevention and treatment, and primary care services produces the best outcomes and offers the most effective approach to caring for people with complex healthcare needs. Much more work lies ahead, but the accomplishments over the last several weeks have been truly monumental."

More than 1,500 community partners and staff were engaged during the reorganization in teleconferences, 21 county town halls and meetings at psychiatric hospitals. A new DMHAS website was created featuring 70 FAQs for stakeholders, vendors, consumers, families, and DMHAS staff. In addition, a newsletter devoted to the reorganization was distributed to more than 6,000 stakeholders, and the Department also has begun using #NJIntegratedHealth on social media. Email migration tutorials and webinars were conducted for DMHAS staff.

As part of the reorganization, Integrity House in Newark was issued an Ambulatory Care license so it will be able to provide integrated health services and the Department issued a standing order that allows licensed pharmacists to dispense naloxone without a prescription. In addition, the first addiction services fee-for-service vendor payment was successfully processed after being transferred from the Department of Human Services.

The New Jersey Health Care Facilities Financing Authority also issued a Request for Proposal to conduct a comprehensive analysis and make strategic recommendations for the state's four psychiatric hospitals, one of which is a forensic center. The consultant will assess management, operations, facilities, staffing, risk management, policies, and procedures, as well as clinical, medical and nursing services. All facilities will be evaluated by March 1, 2018.

To advance the goal of integration, Commissioner Bennett established an Integrated Health Advisory Panel and created a new Integrated Health Services branch with the unanimous approval of the Public Health Council. The new

**Stay Connected**  
with Social Media

**Stay Connected**  
with Email Alerts

LIKE THIS PAGE? SHARE IT  
WITH YOUR FRIENDS.



branch, led by Acting Deputy Commissioner Carolyn Daniels, will coordinate prevention and treatment with primary care, including chronic disease prevention, treatment, and management. The new branch includes DMHAS and a new Community Health Division, comprised of the Office of Primary Care & Rural Health (Federally Qualified Health Centers; Children's Oral Health, Rural Health) and the Office of Community Health & Wellness (Nutrition and Fitness; Chronic Disease Programs; Tobacco Control).

The 16-member Integrated Health Advisory Panel brings expertise in clinical services, medical care, policy, legal issues, and technology. It will assist in creating a patient-centered system of care that includes prevention, wellness, treatment, and sustained recovery through coordinated care. It also will advise on issues impacting integrated care including research, data-driven and evidence-based practices; statutory and regulatory barriers; education of community providers; and expansion of and increased access to patient-centered delivery and information integration.

In addition to Dr. Brito and DiFabio, the other Integrated Health Advisory Panel members include Dr. Kemi Alli, CEO of Henry J. Austin Health Center in Trenton; Robert Budsock, CEO of Integrity House in Newark; James Curtin, executive director of Daytop NJ in Mendham; Gen. Mark Graham, Sr. Director, Rutgers University Behavioral Healthcare National Call Center in Piscataway; Craig Hilton, CEO of Hampton Behavioral Health Center in Westampton; Jillian Hudspeth, president and CEO of the New Jersey Primary Care Association; Professor John Jacobi of Seton Hall University School of Law; Dr. Russell Micoli, VP of Ambulatory Services, Jefferson Washington Twp. Hospital; Alan Oberman, CEO of John Brooks Recovery House in Atlantic City; Mark Schmit, CEO of Eva's Village in Paterson; Linda J. Schwimmer, president and CEO of the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute; Dr. Bonita Stanton, founding dean of Seton Hall-Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine; Eva Turbiner, president and CEO of Zufall Health Organization; and Debra Wentz, president and CEO of the New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies.

"Integrated health care is necessary to treat people holistically. We're glad to have a seat at the table in expanding integrated care," said Debra Wentz. "While a lot of work remains to be done, the Commissioner and the Administration really put in an outstanding effort to listen to stakeholders and the formation of the Panel reflects that."

Jillian Hudspeth said the New Jersey Primary Care Association "is pleased to work on efforts that lead toward providing integrated care and total population health care to all New Jerseyans. Federally Qualified Health Centers provide care to our most vulnerable and we'd like to be able to provide a full range of complete care."

"Commissioner Bennett will be missed," said John Jacobi. "Her dedication to population health and integrated care has been clear, before she became Commissioner and certainly while she served as Commissioner. She cares deeply about the work needed to modernize health care delivery to treat whole people – including their social, primary care, substance use disorder, and mental health needs."

###

**Press Contact:**  
Brian Murray  
609-777-2600



[Contact Us](#) | [Privacy Notice](#) | [Legal Statement & Disclaimers](#) | [Accessibility Statement](#) | 

Statewide: [NJ Home](#) | [Services A to Z](#) | [Departments/Agencies](#) | [FAQs](#)  
Office of the Governor: [Home](#) | [Newsroom](#) | [Media](#) | [Administration](#) | [NJ's Priorities](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Copyright © State of New Jersey, 1996-2018  
Office of the Governor  
PO Box 001  
Trenton, NJ 08625  
609-292-6000