


Governor-elect Sherrill Announces Dr. Stephen Cha as Department of Human Services Nominee

12/23/2025

TRENTON – Today, Governor-elect Mikie Sherrill announced Dr. Stephen Cha as her nominee to lead the Department of Human Services (DHS). Dr. Cha is a nationally recognized healthcare expert with experience in both the public and private sector. Previously, he served as a Counselor to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under Secretary Xavier Becerra, with a portfolio that included major agencies including the Food and Drug Administration and National Institutes of Health. Dr. Cha has deep experience on major policy issues, including Medicaid, maternal health, and experience with crisis response at the national level. 

"The Department of Human Services supports so many New Jerseyans, including children and seniors, with food aid and healthcare. We need an experienced and proven leader at the helm. That is why I'm excited to announce Dr. Stephen Cha as my nominee for Department of Human Services Commissioner. As we prepare for devastating impact of Trump's HR1 on Medicaid and SNAP eligibility, Dr. Cha brings the experience and expertise we need to protect New Jerseyans and deliver for our state," **said Governor-elect Mikie Sherrill.**

"I am grateful to Governor-elect Sherrill for this opportunity to serve the people of New Jersey and lead the Department of Human Services. Like the Governor-elect, I share a deep commitment to supporting people who are struggling to get by. As we face extraordinary challenges coming from the federal government, the Sherrill-Caldwell administration is committed to delivering effective services to our neighbors, whether that is through NJ FamilyCare, food assistance, or support for our elderly and people with disabilities. I'm excited to get to work with the team at DHS and hit the ground running on these priorities," **said Dr. Stephen Cha.**

"Gov.-elect Sherrill and New Jersey families will be supremely served by Dr. Stephen Cha to direct the state's Department of Human Services. Dr. Cha is a proven leader who has taken on some of our nation's toughest challenges – the COVID pandemic, an infant formula shortage, the maternal health crisis. He understands that leadership demands courage, candor, and team effort. In these critical times in the fight for healthcare affordability and Medicaid coverage, Gov.-elect Sherrill will have a battle-tested partner at her side. Congratulations, Dr Cha," **said former U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra.**

Dr. Stephen Cha is a senior leader in both the public and private sector, with deep experience with issues of public health as well as health care finance. Dr. Cha served as Counselor to the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), with a portfolio that at times included: the Food and Drug Administration; the Indian Health Service; the National Institutes of Health; the Agency for Healthcare Research and Policy; the Health Resources and Services Administration, as well as cross cutting issues such as cannabis and maternal health. Dr. Cha also coordinated the HHS response to major crises such as COVID-19 and led Operation Fly Formula in response to the infant formula shortage.

Prior to joining HHS, he served as the Chief Medical Officer for United Healthcare Community & State, responsible for about 6 million Medicaid and CHIP members in 29 states and the District of Columbia. Before that time, Dr. Cha served in federal government for about 12 years, leading state innovations at the Center on Medicare and Medicaid Innovation and also served as first Chief Medical Officer for the Center on Medicaid and CHIP Services, both within the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. He also served in the U.S. House of Representatives under Chairman Henry A. Waxman, as senior professional staff for the Committee on Energy and Commerce and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. Until the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Cha served as a part time primary care physician in a homeless shelter in Washington, DC for over a decade.

Dr. Cha holds a bachelor's degree in political science and a Doctor of Medicine from Brown University. He also holds a master's degree in health services research from Yale University.

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Governor-elect Mikie Sherrill

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