



# First Lady Tammy Murphy Releases Nurture NJ: New Jersey Blueprint for Maternal and Infant Health and Path for the Next Decade

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**TRENTON** – First Lady Tammy Murphy today announced the release of [Nurture NJ: New Jersey Blueprint for Maternal and Infant Health and Path Forward for the Next Decade](https://www.nj.gov/njmihia/documents/NurtureNJ-MIHIA-Blueprint.pdf) (<https://www.nj.gov/njmihia/documents/NurtureNJ-MIHIA-Blueprint.pdf>),

a living roadmap to document and support the State's progress in transforming its maternal and infant health landscape. The report looks back on the accomplishments of the First Lady's [Nurture NJ initiative](https://www.nj.gov/governor/admin/fl/nurturenj.shtml) (<https://www.nj.gov/governor/admin/fl/nurturenj.shtml>), provides a roadmap for other states looking to take on this work, and lays out forward-looking pillars to advance cross-sector action for maternal and infant health.

Nurture NJ brought thousands of partners together under a shared vision, directed unprecedented funding toward maternal and infant health efforts, and established mechanisms to support long-term sustainability so the work can continue and deepen over time. The report was informed by extensive stakeholder engagement, review and integration of findings from the [Rutgers School of Public Health evaluation of Nurture NJ](https://sites.rutgers.edu/nurture-nj/) (<https://sites.rutgers.edu/nurture-nj/>), and coordination between the Office of the First Lady and the New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority.

"When we started Nurture NJ eight years ago, we faced a stark reality: New Jersey, a state with world-class health systems and extraordinary providers, was failing far too many of its mothers and babies – especially Black and Brown mothers and babies," **said First Lady Tammy Murphy**. "Through Nurture NJ, we have reached into every corner of our state in our tireless pursuit of transformational change. And, while we are immensely proud of the progress we have achieved, we know much work remains. With this report, we are leaving behind a clear and detailed roadmap to maintain our momentum and realize our goal of making New Jersey the safest, most equitable state in the nation to deliver and raise a baby."

"Over this administration, the importance of maternal and infant health has been amplified, and initiatives like Nurture NJ have been instrumental in bringing disparities to light and driving systemic change," **said Lisa Asare, President and CEO of the New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority**. "We have made tremendous progress – but there is still work ahead. It will require us to activate, collaborate, and sustain our momentum. In New Jersey, we're doing the work, building partnerships, and leading the charge to ensure every mom and baby is supported at every stage."

Over the past quarter century, New Jersey faced a steep maternal and infant health crisis, ranking among the worst in the nation for maternal outcomes and experiencing some of the widest racial disparities in maternal and infant health. In response, First Lady Tammy Murphy launched Nurture NJ in 2019 with an ambitious goal to make New Jersey the safest, most equitable state in the nation to deliver and raise a baby.

Since the launch of Nurture NJ, New Jersey has made significant progress, rising nationally from 47th to 25th in the maternal mortality rankings and from 5th to 3rd in the infant mortality rankings. What began as a state-level initiative has since become a model of national and global influence, drawing interest from policymakers, public health leaders and advocates across the country and around the world.

Nurture NJ built a one-of-a-kind statewide, coordinated approach to maternal and infant health anchored by the development of the [2021 Nurture NJ Maternal and Infant Health Strategic Plan](https://nurturenj.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/20210120-Nurture-NJ-Strategic-Plan.pdf) (<https://nurturenj.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/20210120-Nurture-NJ-Strategic-Plan.pdf>),

which engaged hundreds of leaders across sectors as well as moms and families to set a comprehensive vision and roadmap for change. Large-scale outreach efforts like Family Festivals and leadership summits helped connect tens of thousands of families with resources and elevate maternal and infant health as a shared public priority.

The initiative also made major strides in policy innovation, signing 78 laws and resolutions over eight years and launching groundbreaking programs to expand access, reduce inequities and strengthen care. These policies include the launch of Family Connects NJ, the nation's most robust universal nurse home visitation program; becoming the third state in the nation to cover doula care through Medicaid – and the first state to require doulas to be community doula trained to qualify for Medicaid reimbursement, ensuring culturally competent care; and creating the first-in-the-nation New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority (NJMIHIA), which will be the arm of government that continues the vital work of Nurture NJ past the Murphy Administration. NJMIHIA will continue to lay a strong foundation for statewide collaborative action to advance maternal and infant health.

To build upon this positive momentum, the report lays out six pillars with goals to advance cross-sector collaboration.

**Enabling Environment:**

**1. Multisector Leadership and Community-Driven Accountability:** Maintain New Jersey’s momentum toward improved maternal and infant health through sustained multisector leadership, transparency and community-driven accountability, and coordination anchored by the New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority and Center.

**2. Innovation Across Policy, Programming and Partnerships:** Foster innovation across policy, programs and partnerships to close persistent gaps in maternal and infant health – by testing, adapting, sustaining and scaling promising approaches that respond to community needs.

**Strong Perinatal Care Systems:**

**3. Respectful, High-Quality and Culturally Responsive Care:** Ensure that all mothers in New Jersey – regardless of race, zip code, or income – receive respectful, high-quality, evidence-based and culturally responsive care through the elevation of best practices across clinical and community settings.

**4. Strong Perinatal Workforce from Communities Most Impacted by Disparities:** Build a strong perinatal workforce in New Jersey – one that is well-compensated, equitably supported and reflects the communities it serves.

**5. Family-Centered and Comprehensive Postpartum Services:** Transform postpartum care into a fully integrated, universal system – reaching every mother in New Jersey with timely, trusted and continuous support from hospital discharge through the first year and beyond.

**Thriving Families:**

**6. Family-Sustaining Economic and Living Conditions:** Ensure New Jersey’s economic and living conditions support families to thrive – by strengthening and coordinating policies, systems changes and other actions beyond the healthcare system.

Over the past eight years, New Jersey has made significant progress in transforming maternal and infant health, driven by strong state leadership, cross-sector partnerships and the commitment of community leaders, advocates and providers. Sustaining and expanding these gains will require ongoing prioritization of maternal and infant health at the highest levels of government, as well as continued efforts to break down remaining silos and deepen coordination across government departments and agencies, health systems, community-based services, researchers, advocates and community leaders.

**Governor Phil Murphy**

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