

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Dedicates New Jersey Department of Health Building in Honor of Commissioner Persichilli

09/28/2022

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today joined State officials, public employees, and health care professionals in a ceremony to dedicate the New Jersey Department of Health's office building in Trenton as the "Judith M. Persichilli Building." The Governor unveiled the new name following his announcement in June 2021 that the building would be named in honor of Commissioner of Health Persichilli for her service to the people of New Jersey, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Commissioner Persichilli has been an invaluable advisor and partner over the past several years, helping our state navigate the many challenges of an unprecedented pandemic," **said Governor Murphy**. "Her composure and dependability as she led the Department of Health and kept residents informed alongside me during countless COVID briefings has made the name 'Judy Persichilli' ubiquitous throughout our state. This building will serve as a reminder of the illustrious career of 'the woman who needs no introduction,' both as a leader in the health care sector and as New Jersey's distinguished Commissioner of Health."

"To say I am overwhelmed and humbled by this honor is an understatement," **said Commissioner Persichilli**. "This building will reflect the hard work and commitment of all who have worked throughout the pandemic and our commitment to public health."

Commissioner Persichilli began serving as Acting Commissioner of Health on August 5, 2019. She was confirmed by the State Senate as the 22nd Commissioner of Health on January 9, 2020, not long before New Jersey saw its first confirmed case of COVID-19 on March 4, 2020.

Throughout the pandemic, Commissioner Persichilli led the Department of Health and guided the State's response to a novel and deadly virus while sharing critical information with the public during the Governor's regular COVID-19 briefings.

The enabling legislation signed by the Governor in November 2021 to designate the state-of-the-art facility at 55 North Willow Street, which was completed in late 2020, was sponsored by Senator Shirley Turner, Assembly Speaker Craig J. Coughlin, and Assemblyman Raj Mukherji.

"On the front lines of New Jersey's pandemic response, it comes as no surprise Commissioner Persichilli has become a household name," **said Assembly Speaker Craig J. Coughlin**. "Working to keep New Jerseyans informed, but above all safe and healthy, today's official renaming ceremony is a fitting honor to memorialize her incredibly diligent and dedicated leadership of the NJDOH."

"Commissioner Judith Persichilli has dedicated her entire career to improving the health of the communities throughout our state, supporting our healthcare workers, and strengthening our healthcare system," **said Senator Shirley K. Turner**. "She has distinguished herself as the first nurse to be named as Commissioner of the Department of Health. She is also most deserving of the dedication of the Judith M. Persichilli Building, in recognition of her pivotal role in overseeing the public health during a pandemic. It is fitting that her legacy be associated with a building that is home to the agencies that protect and improve the health of all New Jersey residents. I am proud to join in honoring her legacy."

"The efforts of the Commissioner and her team throughout this once-in-a-century crisis have truly saved countless lives," **said Assemblyman Mukherji**. "Even before her role as Commissioner, she dedicated her life to serving the people of New Jersey as a health care professional. Her many awards are testament to that. Naming this building in her honor is a befitting way to recognize her bravery, dedication and leadership."

Prior to leading the department, Commissioner Persichilli served as the Acting Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of University Hospital in Newark. Commissioner Persichilli was president emerita of CHE Trinity Health, the health ministry formed in May 2013 by the consolidation of Catholic Health East and Trinity Health of Livonia, MI. She previously served as the interim president and chief executive officer (CEO) of CHE Trinity Health. Prior to this appointment, Commissioner Persichilli was President and CEO of Catholic Health East.

Commissioner Persichilli joined CHE in 2003 as the Executive Vice President of the Mid-Atlantic Division. She was promoted to Executive Vice President of acute care for the system in 2008 and then to Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer in December 2009 before assuming the role of CEO. Prior to joining CHE's System Office, she served for eight years as CEO at St. Francis Medical Center in Trenton.

Persichilli received her nursing diploma from the St. Francis Hospital School of Nursing, a Bachelor of Science in Nursing summa cum laude from Rutgers University, and a Master of Arts in Administration summa cum laude from Rider University. She also received an honorary Doctor of Health degree from Georgian Court University in 2009. In May 2011, Commissioner Persichilli received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, CT.

"Commissioner Persichilli has been a good friend to the Mercer community throughout her celebrated career, which began in Mercer County, where Judy earned her nursing degree," **said Mercer County Executive Brian M. Hughes**. "From Day 1 of the pandemic response, Judy worked tirelessly to deliver accurate scientific information to the people of New Jersey, ultimately saving lives. Congratulations Commissioner, on this acknowledgement of your hard work on behalf of the people of the great State of New Jersey."

"Today, we salute and thank Commissioner Persichilli for her service, including her steady-handed guidance through the COVID-19 pandemic," **said Trenton Mayor W. Reed Gusciora**. "Under the leadership of the Commissioner, the City of Trenton was able to develop stronger public health systems, identify available resources, and make investments to improve resident services. On behalf of the City, we thank her for embodying the hope, resiliency, and thoughtfulness we ask for from our public servants."

"I consider it a great honor and a privilege to have stood alongside Governor Murphy and Commissioner Persichilli for two years while updating the residents of New Jersey on the state's progress as we battled against the COVID-19 pandemic," **said Colonel Patrick J. Callahan, Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police**. "Commissioner Persichilli is the epitome of poise and professionalism and I can think of no one more deserving to receive such a distinction."

"Commissioner Persichilli is the right time to lead the Department of Health," said Deborah Hartel, NJDOH Deputy Commissioner, Integrated Health Services. "Her healthcare experience, strength of character, compassion for the vulnerable and mission-driven focus guided us through the greatest health challenge of our lifetimes. I am proud to serve the residents of New Jersey under her leadership."

"The Commissioner has worked tirelessly throughout this pandemic leading her team to work hard, never assume, be optimistic, use our intelligence and to take the work seriously, but never take ourselves too seriously," said Robin Ford, NJDOH Deputy Commissioner, Health Systems. "The state of New Jersey and Department of Health were fortunate she said yes to this job and this building will forever be a reminder of her hard work and dedication to the people of New Jersey."

"Through the most turbulent COVID-19 times, Commissioner Persichilli has provided sure and steady leadership," said Edward Lifshitz, MD, FACP, Medical Director, Infectious and Zoonotic Disease Program, NJDOH Communicable Disease Service. "Her skill and unstinting efforts helped guide our response, educate the citizens and healthcare professionals of New Jersey, and ultimately save lives."

"Commissioner Persichilli has been a true leader throughout her time at NJDOH," said Tina Tan, MD, MPH, State Epidemiologist/Assistant Commissioner, NJDOH Division of Epidemiology, Environmental and Occupational Health. "During COVID-19, she worked tirelessly to guide NJDOH's response and to support the NJDOH professionals in their work. She always puts the health of the people of New Jersey first, and she has made a difference."

"Commissioner Persichilli is a respected member of the health care community who has dedicated her life to serving the people of New Jersey," said Assemblyman Herb Conaway M.D., Chair of the Assembly Health Committee. "Like many of our colleagues in health care, the Commissioner worked tirelessly throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. She expertly directed countless public health initiatives and conveyed critical information to the residents of this state during an unprecedented crisis. Renaming this building in her honor is a befitting way to recognize her courage and leadership."

"Throughout the ups and downs of the coronavirus pandemic and myriad other health challenges facing our state in recent years, Commissioner Judy Persichilli has been a constant professional, and provided stabilizing leadership as well as the unflinching confidence that our state could and would weather these storms," said Senator Joseph Vitale, Chair of the Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee. "This naming recognition is well-earned, and will serve as a fitting reminder of the commissioner's dedication and hard work in these perilous times."

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