

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Announces Appointments to Opioid Recovery and Remediation Advisory Council

12/22/2022

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy announced today the appointments of 10 public members to the Opioid Recovery and Remediation Advisory Council. The Council, which was established under Executive Order No. 305, will provide recommendations for uses of the funds that the State of New Jersey is receiving as a result of nationwide settlement agreements with several opioid manufacturers and distributors for their contributions to the ongoing opioid epidemic.

“As we work to combat the opioid epidemic, it is essential that our approach continues to be informed by individuals and communities who have experienced it firsthand, whether that be personally or professionally,” **said Governor Murphy**. “By distributing proceeds from national opioid litigation settlements efficiently and equitably, we will move closer to ending the opioid epidemic and supporting those affected by it. I am proud to appoint members to this Advisory Council today and I look forward to their valuable and critical insight.”

As part of the agreements, the several opioid manufacturers and distributors will pay the State of New Jersey and eligible counties and municipalities a combined total of over \$600 million in settlement funds over the next two decades. The purpose of the council will be to make recommendations for the Administration’s consideration regarding the prioritization and effective use of the State’s share of these settlement funds in ways that align with the terms of the settlements. This process will also include review of submissions from members of the public – including treatments providers, advocates, residents with substance use disorders, and social service organizations – regarding the use of these settlement funds. Public input was accepted through an online portal from August 31 through October 31.

The funding must go towards goals such as treating opioid use disorder, addressing the needs of justice-involved individuals, offering harm reduction services, preventing overdose deaths, supporting relevant research and training, and other similar ways of combating the opioid epidemic – a crisis that has tragically taken over 14,000 lives in New Jersey in the past five years alone.

The Opioid Recovery and Remediation Advisory Council will be chaired by the Commissioner of the Department of Human Services and include as members the Attorney General and the Commissioners of the Departments of Health and Children and Families, along with the appointees named today.

“These settlement funds are the result of a once in a generation effort to hold accountable drug manufacturers for the devastation they have caused, and we are considering the disbursement of the funds with equal gravity,” **said New Jersey Department of Human Services Commissioner Sarah Adelman**. “With the establishment of the Council, we are bringing together individuals with lived experience, providers and experts with the intention of expanding programs to prevent and treat opioid addiction and expanding services for those who have suffered. I look forward to working with my fellow council members to ensure the distribution of these funds is as impactful as possible.”

“No amount of money can make up for the lives lost and devastated by the opioid crisis, but we can put these settlement funds back into the communities that have suffered most to provide needed resources that will help with prevention, treatment, and recovery,” **said Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin**. “I am honored to join our state’s top experts in this space to ensure that every voice is heard as we chart a recovery course to improve and save the lives of our residents. The work of this council will complement the life-saving resources already being provided across New Jersey, and will advance the Murphy Administration’s mission to end this epidemic.”

“The efforts of the Opioid Recovery and Remediation Advisory Council will help restore and save lives,” **said New Jersey Department of Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli**. “I look forward to the council’s work on how to best use these settlement funds to help end the opioid crisis.”

“The opioid epidemic in New Jersey has destabilized families and deprived many children of a nurturing and safe environment in which to grow,” **said New Jersey Department of Children and Families Commissioner Christine Norbut Beyer**. “I’m honored to be a part of this advisory council to help ensure that individuals, families and communities receive the resources and supports needed to recover from addiction and to heal families.”

The Council’s membership reflects New Jersey’s diversity and incorporates the perspectives of individuals who have lived experience with the opioid epidemic, including those who have experienced a substance use disorder and their families, as well as public health and policy experts.

The Governor appointed the following members to the Advisory Council:

- Mavis Asiedu-Frimpong
- Brenda N. Azanedo
- Robert Detore
- Jenna Mellor
- Solomon Middleton-Williams
- Dr. Amesika Nyaku
- Shirla Simpson
- Brian Thompson
- Morgan Thompson
- Dr. Debra Wentz

The work of this council will support other ongoing efforts by the State to address the opioid epidemic and help New Jerseyans who have been impacted by this issue.

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