

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy, Senate President Sweeney, and Assembly Speaker Coughlin Announce Naming of New Department of Health Building for Commissioner Judy Persichilli

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NEWARK – Governor Phil Murphy, Senate President Steve Sweeney, and Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin today announced that the new Department of Health building in Downtown Trenton will be named after Health Commissioner Judy Persichilli, in honor of her past and ongoing service to the people of New Jersey during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Each and every day throughout the pandemic, Judy has remained singularly engaged to save lives and protect public health,” **said Governor Murphy**. “She has been the right leader for these times, and I could not be prouder to have asked Judy to serve as Commissioner two years ago. Now all those who pass through the halls of the ‘Judith M. Persichilli Building’ will be reminded of Judy’s selfless, honorable, and dedicated service to our state and its residents during the greatest public health crisis in New Jersey’s history.”

“From the day that COVID-19 hit New Jersey, Commissioner Persichilli has been standing on the frontlines helping to preserve the health and safety of every single New Jerseyan. She is a true humanitarian,” **said Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver, who serves as Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs**. “Commissioner Persichilli’s tireless leadership and expertise in helping us emerge from this pandemic has been remarkable and I can think of no other person in the State who is more deserving of this honor.”

“This is a fitting tribute to the tireless efforts of Judy Persichilli to safeguard the health and safety of New Jerseyans in the past year,” **said Senate President Steve Sweeney**. “Thanks to her leadership as Commissioner of Health, our state was able to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, and this was only the latest achievement in a long and impressive career in health care. I am proud to call Judy a friend, and I will be equally proud to see her name on this impressive new headquarters for the Department of Health.”

“The last year and a half has been a trying time, and in many ways a devastating and heartbreaking time for New Jersey and its residents. Through it all, Commissioner Persichilli remained committed to her duties and helped to guide our ship of state through the worst times of this deadly and unforgiving storm. Through her competence, her intelligence, her foresight and her grace under fire, she has kept us strong and confident, and moving forward so that today we can now see our state begin to turn the corner towards some sense of normalcy and collective public health,” **said Senator Joseph Vitale, Chair of the Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee**. “Further, the commissioner, who is the first registered nurse to serve in that capacity, has been a role model for our stalwart corps of health care workers, and led by example throughout the pandemic through her commitment and inspiring work ethic. She deserves this recognition, along with the eternal thanks and well wishes of all those who call New Jersey home.

“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, the renaming is a fitting honor to memorialize her incredibly diligent and dedicated leadership of the NJDOH.”

“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.”

“Commissioner Persichilli is a true public health hero. I’ve had the privilege of working with her since this began. She has worked tirelessly to protect and save lives in NJ,” **said Dr. Richard Besser, President and CEO of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.** “She continues to work to ensure that the communities that have been hit the hardest have what they need. Under her leadership New Jersey has one of the highest vaccination rates in the nation. We are incredibly fortunate to have her leading the response. It is totally fitting that this building is being named in her honor.”

“This is a proud day for New Jersey and for the community we serve here at University Hospital,” **said Shereef Elnahal, MD MBA, President and CEO of University Hospital and Northern Region COVID-19 Response Coordinator.**

“We’ve been on this journey with the community from the beginning, breaking through hesitancy by genuinely acknowledging the history of medical racism, and eventually changing the narrative to one that emphasizes vaccination against COVID-19 as the first of many steps toward health equity. And I cannot think of a more deserving person than Commissioner Persichilli to be recognized with her namesake on a building where critical public health work will happen for generations to come. On the eve of Juneteenth, we are proud of the Commissioner, proud of this milestone, and proud of this day and everything it signifies.”

As a veteran healthcare executive, Judy Persichilli combined her expertise with compassion and her leadership allowed NJ hospitals to continue to meet the needs of the people who came to our doors through a global pandemic,” **said Amy Mansue, Inspira Health President and CEO and Central Region COVID-19 Response Coordinator.** “We are indebted to her for her sacrifice and forever grateful.”

“I applaud Governor Murphy for naming the New Jersey Department of Health headquarters building after Commissioner Persichilli, who has dedicated her life to serving others as a health care professional and leader,” **said Kevin O’Dowd, Co-CEO of Cooper University Health Care and Southern Region COVID-19 Response Coordinator.** “Having the privilege of serving as the state’s Southern Region Coordinator for COVID-19 response, I see firsthand the positive impact Commissioner Persichilli’s daily dedication and tireless work ethic has for residents of New Jersey during the pandemic. I can think of no more fitting honor – after working for more than 20 years with the dedicated professionals of the New Jersey Department of Health – than to name the headquarters building after one of their own, Commissioner Persichilli.”

Following the passage of enabling legislation in the Assembly and Senate, the new Department of Health building will be renamed the “Judith M. Persichilli Building”. The state-of-the-art-facility, completed in late 2020, houses Department of Health workspace and offices in Downtown Trenton.

Commissioner Judy Persichilli began serving as Acting Commissioner of Health on August 5, 2019. She was confirmed by the State Senate on January 9, 2020.

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.

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