

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

GOVERNOR PHIL MURPHY

GOVERNOR MURPHY ANNOUNCES PLANS TO RETURN THE DIVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES BACK TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy will today deliver to the Legislature his reorganization plan to transfer the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) from the Department of Health (DOH) to the Department of Human Services (DHS). The move reverses a Christie administration decision made last year.

“The DMHAS transfer will reverse a decision made in the waning months of the Christie administration that was rushed through with minimal input and engagement. Repositioning the division is the correct decision for all concerned,” **said Governor Murphy**. “This administration is fully committed to ensuring that government delivers programs and services to our residents in the most effective and efficient manner possible. That means restoring DMHAS at the Department of Human Services so that we put mental health and substance use disorder services back where they belong and under the same roof as Medicaid and social services.”

“I join Governor Murphy in his strong commitment to supporting high quality prevention, treatment and recovery services to address mental health and substance use disorders,” **said DHS Commissioner Carole Johnson**. “I am delighted that the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services will be returning home to the Department of Human Services where it will once again be in the same place as Medicaid and the social services programs that are critical to supporting individuals in need and their families. I also look forward to continuing to work with the Department of Health to make it easier for residents to receive the services they need and modernize our system of care in our state. Exceptional mental health and substance use disorder treatment for New Jersey is our priority.”

“The Department will continue its work to create an integrated licensing system for mental health, substance abuse and primary care,” **said Health Commissioner Dr. Shereef Elnahal**. “We are also committed to our plan to modernize and improve the quality of care in our state psychiatric hospitals and that progress will continue. As our recent Population Health opioid summit demonstrated, we have integrated mental health and substance use disorder treatment into all that we do. We will continue to work hand in hand with the Department of Human Services and other agencies across the state to combat the opioid and mental health challenges in New Jersey.”

“This is exciting. It follows through on the Governor’s promise to support expertise in mental health and addiction services, while advancing modernization of licensing efforts. I am excited by the commitment of Commissioners Johnson and Elnahal to harness the life-saving combination of truly integrated care supported by forward-looking Medicaid structures,” **said John V. Jacobi, Dorothea Dix Professor of Health Law & Policy at Seton Hall Law School**. “This plan appears to strike a great balance of supporting programmatic expertise, while closely aligning the power of Medicaid’s funding with licensing reform. No reorganization is easy, but this one promises to bring Medicaid to the forefront of the effort to support clinically integrated care.”

“The Mental Health Association in New Jersey strongly supports the move of the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services back to the Department of Human Services,” **said president and CEO Carolyn Beauchamp**. “The goal of integrating care for those receiving Medicaid benefits will be better organized when the location is consistent with the populations served. We are also gratified that the Department of Health is working on a license that will help facilitate integration of behavioral and physical health care.”

DMHAS is the state’s principal agency for managing community-based mental health and addiction services, as well as the four state psychiatric hospitals and other behavioral health programs.

The reorganization is part of Governor Murphy’s overall commitment to advance integrated care in New Jersey. That commitment includes proposing a \$100 million budget investment to combat the opioid epidemic by focusing on key tools such as data, improved outpatient treatment options, and addressing social risk factors like

employment and housing. The Governor also included funding in the budget to support the implementation of the Substance Use Disorder waiver to improve access to opioid and other substance abuse treatment options.

DOH will continue to oversee and prioritize the development of a single license for providing integrated behavioral and physical health care.

In addition, for the current time, the psychiatric hospitals will remain in DOH. The Department has begun to undertake rigorous improvement efforts at the state's psychiatric institutions, and a more detailed action plan for these improvements will be made public at a later date.

The Legislature has 60 days to review the plan, which will take effect August 20, 2018.

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