

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Announces Creation of Online Portal & Advisory Council to Receive Input from Members of Public, Stakeholders on Use of Opioid Settlement Funds

08/31/2022

Administration Commemorates Overdose Awareness Day & Continues its Efforts to Combat Opioid Crisis in New Jersey

TRENTON – As part of the Murphy Administration's ongoing efforts to help New Jerseyans impacted by the opioid crisis, and in recognition of Overdose Awareness Day, Governor Phil Murphy today announced additional steps the Administration is taking in New Jersey. Through a new online portal and Executive Order No. 305, the Governor has established two methods through which members of the public and relevant stakeholders can provide their input on the best use of the opioid settlement funds that New Jersey is receiving.

New Jersey and various counties and municipalities throughout the state signed onto nationwide settlement agreements in 2021 with several opioid manufacturers and distributors for their involvement in the ongoing opioid epidemic. A total of \$641 million in settlement funds will be divided amongst the participating State and local governments in New Jersey over the next two decades. An additional opioid settlement reached this month will provide further funding to the State.

The Murphy Administration is committed to using these funds to help individuals and communities in New Jersey that have been impacted by the opioid epidemic, which has taken over 14,600 lives in New Jersey in the past five years alone.

"On Overdose Awareness Day, we not only commemorate the lives tragically lost to overdoses, we also honor their memories by renewing our efforts to help those struggling with substance use disorder and prevent further tragedies from taking place," **said Governor Murphy**. "With the funds our state will receive through these settlement agreements, we have a meaningful opportunity to improve and save the lives of countless New Jerseyans. As we determine the best use of these funds to help combat the opioid crisis here in New Jersey, my Administration wants to hear from members of the public. The input we receive from the Advisory Council that will be created through my Executive Order and online portal will provide valuable insight into how our State can use these funds to further bolster and expand our ongoing support for the many families and communities impacted by this crisis."

To align with the terms of the recent opioid settlements, the funding must go towards goals such as treating opioid use disorder, addressing the needs of criminal justice-involved individuals, offering harm reduction services, preventing overdose deaths, and supporting relevant research and training – among others.

Executive Order No. 305 establishes an Opioid Recovery and Remediation Advisory Council chaired by Commissioner of the Department of Human Services Sarah Adelman and comprising the Attorney General and the Commissioners of the Departments of Health and Children and Families, along with relevant stakeholders who will make recommendations for the Administration's consideration regarding the prioritization and effective use of these funds. The Council's membership will reflect New Jersey's diversity and include people 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 Executive Order also formally establishes the Department of Human Services as the lead agency for purposes of directing the use of funds received from national opioid litigation resolutions and performing the State's reporting, public disclosure, and other compliance obligations under the settlements.

"Today, we remember those tragically lost to overdose and reaffirm our commitment to ending this crisis," **said Department of Human Services Commissioner Sarah Adelman**. "Under the leadership of Governor Murphy, we have made significant progress expanding treatment for substance use, reducing barriers to access and advancing the use and availability of harm reduction interventions like naloxone. These efforts will save lives and help us end the devastating scourge of overdose and the pain it leaves behind. There is more work to do, and the creation of the Opioid Recovery and Remediation Advisory Council and the Opioid Settlement Portal are critical next steps to inform how the state will use opioid settlement funds. We look forward to hearing this input, and working with our partners to help individuals and families impacted by addiction and overdose."

"On Overdose Awareness Day, we honor those lives lost, those communities devastated, and the broken hearts of family and friends. Through their lives, we rededicate our commitment to working to end the opioid crisis," **said Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli**. "The use of these settlement funds will help us expand and create programs that will restore lives and help save lives."

"Today, as we remember lives lost to overdose and recognize the grief of those left behind, we reaffirm our commitment to ending the scourge of addiction in our state," **said Acting Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin**. "The initiatives announced today advance that mission by inviting everyone whose life has been impacted by this insidious disease – from service providers on the front lines of the addiction crisis to individuals who have suffered its devastation firsthand – to help us chart a recovery course making the best use of opioid settlement funding. Their voices and their experiences are invaluable to New Jersey's ongoing efforts to break the cycle of addiction."

"DCF applauds the creation of the Advisory Council to ensure that plans for the use of settlement funds is inclusive of priorities and recommendations of stakeholders, advocates, and most importantly families and consumers," **said Department of children and Families Commissioner, Christine Norbut Beyer**. "We know from our work in advancing the Child Trauma Response Initiative with the Office of the Attorney General that engaging individuals, families, and communities in the design of services and programs is essential to ensuring that resources are most effectively directed to meet their needs."

The online portal, launched in partnership with the Department of Human Services and the Office of Information Technology, will give any member of the public – including, for example, treatment providers, residents with substance use disorders and their loved ones, advocates, and social service organizations – the opportunity to weigh in on how these funds should be used to help those most impacted by the opioid crisis.

Input can range from general suggestions to specific project proposals, but respondents are encouraged to provide as much detail as possible. Relevant state agencies will review and consider each proposal as part of the process to develop spending plans, programs, and evaluations for the funds.

The portal, which will be available in multiple languages, will be open for an initial 60-day comment period to inform planning and will re-open annually to facilitate ongoing input on the State's opioid response and prevention efforts.

Identifying information, such as the person's name and email address, are optional. Anyone who chooses to enter their email address will receive an automated confirmation email, but respondents will not receive a formal response to their proposals.

Alternatively, written proposals may be submitted for consideration by mail to:

**Opioid Funds Proposal c/o
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625**

These steps are a part of the Administration's ongoing efforts to combat the opioid crisis. Under Governor Murphy's leadership, NJ has allocated hundreds of millions of dollars towards addressing the opioid crisis, including creating over 30 evidence-based programs across eight departments, in addition to other initiatives. Efforts include:

- Signing harm reduction and syringe decriminalization legislation (<https://nj.gov/governor/news/news/562022/approved/20220118b.shtml>) into law earlier this year, which has allowed State Departments to expand harm reduction services throughout the state.
- Expanding the Medication-Assisted Treatment Initiative (MATI) (https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dmhas/resources/services/treatment/sa_mati.html) to all seven of the state's current harm reduction centers.
- Launching a Naloxone Distribution Program (<https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/news/pressreleases/2022/approved/20220728.html>) to make this overdose antidote more widely available to first responders and community organizations.
- Awarding contracts and grants to help opioid treatment providers expand access to mobile treatment programs (<https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/news/pressreleases/2022/approved/20220614.html>) and gain cultural competency training (<https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/news/pressreleases/2022/approved/20220222.html>), help community organizations create recovery centers (<https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/news/pressreleases/2022/approved/20220407.html>) for people with substance use disorders, and help mental health providers (<https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/news/pressreleases/2022/approved/20220310.html>) treat individuals with co-occurring substance use disorders.
- Launching a pilot program (<https://nj.gov/governor/news/news/562022/approved/20220614a.shtml>) to assist children and families affected by addiction.
- Expanding access to substance use disorder/opioid addiction treatment resources by making them available online (<https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/news/pressreleases/2022/approved/20220706.html>) and in American Sign Language (<https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/news/pressreleases/2022/approved/20220809.html>).

\$14 million from previous settlements with Insys CEO John Kapoor and McKinsey & Co. have also already been allocated to programs across the Departments of Health, Children and Families, Law and Public Safety, and Corrections to help combat the opioid epidemic as well.

"The overdose crisis continues to claim too many lives and wreak havoc on families and communities," **said Human Services Assistant Commissioner Valerie Mielke, who directs the Department's Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services.** "On this Overdose Awareness Day, we remember those who lost the fight against addiction, but also offer a glimmer of hope to those who are still in the trenches fighting this disease. Addiction is all-consuming, but there is help and recovery is attainable. We remain committed to doing the necessary work to expand access to treatment and life-saving medication, and are excited about the tools announced today, which will help ensure that opioid settlement funds will go towards programs and policies that save lives. As always, we continue to urge residents struggling with substance use disorder needing addiction assistance to call the state's addiction treatment helpline, 1-844-ReachNJ, a 24-hour-a-day, 7 day-a-week addictions help line where people facing addiction or their friends and family can get immediate assistance and support from live, New Jersey-based, trained addiction counselors, regardless of their insurance status."

"For several years, I have worked to ensure that the opioid settlement funds are used to help those most impacted by this crisis, and are specifically dedicated to addiction and prevention programs," **said Senator Troy Singleton.** "The establishment of the Opioid Recovery and Remediation Advisory Council is a significant step toward that goal."

"Creating the Opioid Recovery and Remediation Advisory Council will help our residents combat opioid abuse and expand preventative counseling," **said Assemblyman Dan Benson.** "We know opioids can have a dramatic impact on families and it is often difficult to find the proper treatment. This executive order will ensure people have the resources and tools necessary to get the help they need."

For a copy of Executive Order No. 305, click here (<https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/pdf/EO-305.pdf>).

Submissions will be accepted via the portal now through October 31, 2022. The online portal can be found here ([https://urldefense.com/v3/___https://t.e2ma.net/click/nz7h0h/7ys5259b/3vn4iz_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!lhBfk1L_SbcgCMbmZtrKdnx0FFlumGkD2-vPNhhv4shvJNwuYx_4ROKHCa1ft7PdNgnLc98vZ8JZbqNiiJUpfi\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/___https://t.e2ma.net/click/nz7h0h/7ys5259b/3vn4iz_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!lhBfk1L_SbcgCMbmZtrKdnx0FFlumGkD2-vPNhhv4shvJNwuYx_4ROKHCa1ft7PdNgnLc98vZ8JZbqNiiJUpfi$))

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