

PO BOX 004  
TRENTON, NJ 08625

CONTACT: Jayne O'Connor  
Wendi Patella  
609-777-2600

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## NEWS RELEASE

### **Governor Whitman Creates Task Force to Study Affordability and Accessibility of Health Care**

Gov. Christie Whitman today signed an executive order creating the Task Force on the Affordability and Accessibility of Health Care in New Jersey.

Comprised of 25 members, the task force will replace the existing Task Force on Mandated Health Benefits to conduct a more comprehensive study of health care and health insurance in the state.

"When New Jerseyans have access to affordable health care, everyone benefits," Gov. Whitman said. "Quality health care is vital both to the well-being of our citizens as well as to the public health at large."

In addition to the Commissioners of the Departments of Health and Senior Services, Banking and Insurance, and Human Services, members will be appointed from the state legislature, health industry, business organizations, and the health care profession. Six members will be selected by the Legislature, with the Governor making all other appointments.

The task force, which will hold a minimum of two public hearings, is charged with comparing the affordability and accessibility of health insurance in New Jersey with other states, and identifying ways state laws or regulations can increase access and affordability. It will also study the quality of health care and the cost of mandated health benefits, study pending legislation on additional mandated benefits, and evaluate employee costs of employer-sponsored health coverage.

