

Office of the Governor

NEWS RELEASE

PO BOX 004
TRENTON, NJ 08625

CONTACT: Jayne O'Connor
609-777-2600
Rita Manno (DHSS)
(609) 984-7160

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GOVERNOR KICKS OFF NJ EASE IN BURLINGTON COUNTY

Governor Christie Whitman today announced that Burlington County has become the tenth New Jersey county to implement a streamlined system for seniors to receive information and services under the New Jersey Easy Access, Single Entry (NJ EASE) project.

"For Burlington seniors and their families, one-stop shopping for information and services has arrived," said Whitman. "NJ EASE will promote wellness, independence, dignity and choice for older adults and help put an end to the difficulties often experienced by those seeking senior services."

NJ EASE is a state initiative developed in partnership with a number of county governments to create a new and easy way for seniors and their family members to learn about services within their communities. Instead of contacting many agencies, NJ EASE will enable individuals in Burlington County to now call one telephone number in their community to receive help in learning about and applying for services.

"NJ EASE will make it easier for the 60,000 seniors who call Burlington County home to get the information and services they need to remain independent far into their later years," said State Health and Senior Services Commissioner Len Fishman.

"Whether you want to apply for an established program like PAAD or find out about an emerging option like assisted living, the answers to your questions are as close as the nearest phone," Fishman told an audience of seniors, local officials and service providers attending the county's NJ EASE kickoff celebration today at the Burlington County Human Services Facility in Westampton. Burlington County Freeholder Director Theresa Brown said, "Government has just become more user-friendly for Burlington County's senior population, and we're pleased to become part of the NJ EASE network. This program creates a vital link between our older residents and the menu of services we offer."

By calling Burlington County's NJ EASE telephone number -- 609-265-5069 -- seniors and their families can obtain:

- Information about a wide range of vital services and programs, such as PAAD (Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged and Disabled), Lifeline and Medicaid
- Referrals to other agencies and help in contacting them Assistance in a local office or their homes to complete applications for services
- One-stop benefits screening for programs with income and resource limits
- Home visits to help with paperwork or check on seniors who may be having trouble taking care of themselves
- In-home comprehensive assessments to determine an individual's need for supportive services
- Development of a care plan to identify and arrange for services
- The assistance of care managers to obtain and monitor services and to periodically review and adjust an individual's care plan to ensure it continues to address the person's changing needs.

In addition to Burlington County, Atlantic, Camden, Essex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Somerset, Sussex and Union counties have begun serving seniors through the NJ EASE program. Warren County will go on-line with NJ EASE on December 1,

and Cumberland and Salem will begin serving their residents using the new system on December 15.

Burlington has established five access points for NJ EASE services at the Burlington County Office on Aging offices within the county Human Services Facility in Westampton, the New Gretna Municipal Building in Bass River, and at nutrition sites in Bordentown, Browns Mills and Willingboro. Specially trained staff with the Office on Aging will provide information and assistance and outreach services. Social workers with the office and the Burlington County Board of Social Services will provide care management services for seniors and their families.

State planning for NJ EASE is supported by a \$238,251 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant and \$400,592 in matching state money.