

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Announces Department of Human Services Commissioner Carole Johnson to Join Biden-Harris Administration

12/29/2020

Johnson to Join President-elect Biden's White House COVID-19 Response Team

Deputy Commissioner Sarah Adelman to Become Acting Human Services Commissioner

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today announced that Carole Johnson, Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Human Services, will depart the Murphy Administration as of January 15, 2021 to join the Biden-Harris Administration's White House COVID-19 response team. Deputy Commissioner Sarah Adelman will become Acting Commissioner of the Department beginning January 16, 2021.

Commissioner Johnson joined Governor Murphy's Cabinet on his first day in office on January 16, 2018, returning home to New Jersey after serving for more than five years as the Domestic Policy Council public health lead in the Obama White House, including during the Ebola and Zika public health emergencies. Johnson previously worked on health care and public health policy on Capitol Hill, in academia, and in the non-profit and philanthropy sectors. She is originally from North Cape May.

"From day one, Carole Johnson has been one of our most valuable team members and a leading voice for serving New Jersey's most vulnerable residents," **said Governor Murphy**. "For three years, she has skillfully and ably managed our largest agency in state government, overseeing Medicaid, food assistance, child care programs, and mental health and addiction services, among other responsibilities. We're sad to see her depart the Administration, but are excited that she'll be taking a critical role serving President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris in the White House as our nation continues to battle the COVID-19 pandemic."

"It has been an incredible honor to work with Commissioner Johnson as she led our dedicated team in tireless service to New Jersey residents over the last three years," **said incoming Department of Human Services Acting Commissioner Sarah Adelman**. "I hope to continue building on our efforts to serve New Jersey's most vulnerable residents, as well as making services available to many who need support for the first time as a result of COVID-19. I am grateful for the Governor's confidence and will work to ensure a seamless transition for the residents who rely on the Department of Human Services for assistance. On behalf of Deputy Commissioner Elisa Neira, Chief of Staff Andrea Katz, and the entire Department, I will miss working with Commissioner Johnson and wish her the best in her new role."

Under Commissioner Johnson's leadership for the past three years, the Department of Human Services has:

- Supported New Jersey's working families by investing nearly \$100 million in new resources in child care subsidies, raised infant care child care subsidies by nearly 40%, and cut parent co-pays in half.

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- Made increasing equity and reducing racial disparities in infant and maternal birth outcomes a priority by launching new doula services benefits in Medicaid, increasing Medicaid reimbursement for midwife care, and developing new payment models for prenatal care;
- Increased access to food assistance by launching online shopping for SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) recipients, making it easier for community college students to get SNAP, creating SNAP Awareness Week to connect families to supports, and promoting farmers' markets as a SNAP option;
- Added and made it easier to access new Medicaid benefits, including autism services, addiction peer supports, tobacco cessation, diabetes prevention and Hepatitis C treatment;
- Expanded access to opioid addiction treatment by lifting prior authorization for medications to treat addiction, raising payment rates for long-term residential treatment, and partnering with county jails to support re-entry populations with treatment;
- Supported individuals with disabilities by creating an initiative to expand housing options for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, funding a strategy to support individuals with co-occurring I/DD and mental health concerns, and launching a new grant program to advance inclusive and healthy communities for individuals with disabilities and NJ ABLE, which allows individuals with disabilities to save tax-free for eligible expenses without losing eligibility for Medicaid and other benefits;
- Prioritized the needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness by creating a statewide homeless hotline to provide emergency shelter, making it easier for families experiencing homelessness to access child care to ease apartment and job searches, and securing funding to help homeless shelters better serve LGBTQ+ individuals;
- Restored New Jersey's role as the state refugee coordinator and established the New Jersey Office of New Americans to assist immigrant communities in accessing services and reinforce New Jersey's role as a welcoming state;
- Supported reentry efforts by improving access to social services before and after prison and jail release and created behind the walls addiction treatment and overdose prevention and connections to community-based treatment;
- Increased reimbursements for audiologists participating in a Department program that provides free refurbished hearing aids to residents over the age of 65 with low incomes, and expanding the program to New Jersey's largest county; and
- Expanded a vision assistive technology program to more New Jersey libraries.

Additionally, the Department of Human Services has led the fight against the health and economic impacts of COVID on New Jersey's most vulnerable communities by:

- Getting families in need of health care and affordable food enrolled in Medicaid and SNAP quickly and keeping families enrolled throughout the public health emergency;
- Covering COVID testing, visits for testing, and testing-related services at no cost;
- Launching fully subsidized emergency child care assistance for essential workers during the spring COVID peak and child care tuition assistance for families in remote learning due to COVID this fall
- Working with the Legislature to increase wages for the frontline health and social services workforce;
- Making access to health care easier during the pandemic through expanded use of and payment for telehealth;
- Combating the opioid epidemic by distributing the overdose reversal drug Narcan free to residents and Emergency Medical Services, promoting our addiction services help line, and making it easier to get treatment by increasing access to treatment medications;
- Expanding access to mental health care through new help lines for residents, health care workers, first responders and individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing;

- Supporting older residents during the pandemic with food delivery, regular check-ins to ensure medications and supplies are well-stocked, and creating virtual services; and
- Helping individuals with disabilities throughout the COVID crisis by transitioning to virtual services and supports and enhancing funding of residential services to help individuals remain at home safely.

The Department of Human Services is the largest agency in New Jersey state government and provides health care and social services to millions of New Jerseyans through Medicaid, food assistance, child care, mental health and addiction services, aging supports and services, disability services, and supports for individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

Bio - Sarah Adelman, Deputy Commissioner:

Sarah Adelman currently serves as Deputy Commissioner at the New Jersey Department of Human Services, overseeing the Division of Developmental Disabilities, Division of Aging Services, and the Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services, which operates the Medicaid/NJ FamilyCare program. These programs have a budget of more than \$17 billion in state and federal funds and a staff of more than 5,000. She also serves as the Commissioner's designee on the Board of the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency.

Before joining Governor Murphy's Administration, Adelman previously served as Vice President at the New Jersey Association of Health Plans and Chief of Staff at the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute. She also previously served on the Board of Trustees for Samaritan Healthcare and Hospice, the Board of Directors for a statewide child abuse and neglect prevention program, and the Commerce and Industry Association of New Jersey's Healthcare Steering Committee.

Adelman was named among "New Jersey's Top 10 Healthcare Policy Analysts and Experts" by NJ Spotlight. She received her Bachelor of Arts summa cum laude from Rowan University and a certificate in Advanced Healthcare Leadership from Seton Hall University as a fellow in the inaugural class of the New Jersey Healthcare Executives Leadership Academy.

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