

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Hosts Roundtable Discussion on Health Care Affordability in New Jersey

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Governor Announces Shabnam Salih as Director of Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency

BURLINGTON – Governor Phil Murphy, alongside consumers, health care providers, and cabinet officials, today hosted a roundtable discussion on health care affordability in New Jersey. Governor Murphy also announced Shabnam Salih as the first Director of the newly created Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency within the Governor’s Office.

“Many families lose sleep over the cost of health insurance coverage, how to pay their medical expenses, and about the financial turmoil an unexpected accident or illness will cause,” **said Governor Murphy**. “My Administration has taken action to alleviate some of this burden, such as protecting the Affordable Care Act, ending surprise out-of-network bills, and capping out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs. Our new Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency will continue our work and lead the effort to ensure all New Jerseyans have access to high-quality, affordable health care by reducing consumer health care costs, making insurance more affordable, and improving price transparency.”

Announced by Governor Murphy in his 2020 State of the State Address, the Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency will guide the Administration’s work on health care affordability and price transparency. Housed within the Governor’s Office, the Office will develop a strategic plan for improved consumer affordability, health care quality, cost transparency, and taxpayer savings. The Office will work closely with several departments across the Administration to implement a variety of strategic initiatives to achieve these goals, including the development of data foundation within the Department of Banking and Insurance.

Governor Murphy also announced Shabnam Salih as Director of the Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency. Salih has served as Senior Policy Advisor to the Governor and advanced key priorities in the area of health, human services, health insurance, and children and families since February 2018. During her time in the Governor’s Office, she has worked extensively on a range of issues including the opioid epidemic, the individual health insurance market, behavioral health, state health benefits, and homelessness. From 2013 to 2018, Salih was with the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers, and served in a variety of policy and external affairs positions, including as the Associate Director of Policy and Engagement. Salih was also a legislative aide in the New Jersey Senate and is a former Teach For America Corps Member. Salih has a Master’s in Public Administration from Baruch College and a Bachelor of Arts from The College of New Jersey.

“I know firsthand, and through the experience of close family and friends, how frightening and stressful it is to be priced out of affordable health care and coverage,” **said Shabnam Salih, Director of the Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency**. “Through Governor Murphy’s commitment and leadership, we have made important progress protecting consumers and creating health care savings, but we recognize there is more work to be done. I thank Governor Murphy for this opportunity and I share his commitment to ensuring we continue to improve health care affordability and transparency for the residents of New Jersey.”

“I am proud of the work we have done as an administration to make health coverage more accessible for New Jersey residents,” **said Department of Banking and Insurance Commissioner Marlene Caride**. “I want to thank Governor Murphy for his steadfast commitment to ensuring that New Jersey families can get the health care they deserve. I look forward to working with the new Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency to drill down on health care costs through the collection and analysis of data that will inform policy actions aimed at lowering costs for consumers and creating greater transparency to the benefit of our residents.”

“In sharp contrast to what is going on in Washington, the Murphy Administration is committed to protecting access to affordable health care and reducing health care costs for the betterment of all New Jerseyans,” **said New Jersey Department of Human Services Commissioner Carole Johnson**. “Whether it be improving Medicaid benefits, providing smart oversight and accountability of health care programs or promoting access to vital social programs that help lead to better health outcomes for all New Jerseyans.”

better health care outcomes, the Murphy Administration is focused on a stronger, fairer – and healthier - New Jersey. We look forward to working with the new Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency to continue this vital work to improve the quality of life of residents across the state.”

“Every day healthcare providers are doing incredible work to save lives and improve quality of life of our residents,” **said New Jersey Health Commissioner Judith M. Persichilli**. “While excellent work is going on in this field, we know there is much opportunity to increase efficiency and quality in the system. The Department is making investments in preventive and primary care, quality of care and ensuring consumers have information to make informed healthcare decisions to help reduce costs.”

“We have taken a surgical approach when it comes to the state-administered health plans by working with our public sector union partners, incorporating in-house data analytics, and increasing oversight and efficiencies. Collectively, these efforts have resulted in lower health plan premiums for the second year in a row while generating hundreds of millions in sustainable, structural savings without impacting the quality of care,” **said State Treasurer Elizabeth Maher Muoio**.

“New Jersey has an affordability crisis, and our healthcare costs are no exception,” **said Senator Troy Singleton**. “Comprehensive data about the quality and cost of the healthcare we receive allows all of us, as policymakers, to monitor the efforts to reduce these costs while improving accessibility, affordability and quality.”

“In New Jersey, we have made it a priority to ensure every one of our 9 million residents have access to affordable healthcare,” **said Assemblyman Herb Conaway**. “Continuing these conversations are important to gaining a complete understanding of the issues families face with healthcare and working to help them.”

For the Administration’s Health Care Cost Savings efforts, click here
(http://d31hzhk6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20200203/5d/fd/f4/43/ed35fc449e821188019022a9/Health_Care_Cost_Savings.pdf)

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