

## Governor Phil Murphy

# Governor Murphy Signs Legislative Package to Fight New Jersey's Maternal and Infant Health Crisis

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**TRENTON** - Governor Phil Murphy today signed a legislative package into law to combat New Jersey's maternal and infant health crisis and provide health benefits coverage for fertility preservation services. The series of bills aims to improve health outcomes for New Jersey's mothers and babies and address the racial inequities in maternal and infant health care. The legislation will support the efforts of the Administration's Nurture NJ campaign, which is led by First Lady Tammy Murphy.

"In New Jersey, we are committed to improving the health and safety of every mother and child," **said Governor Murphy**. "By signing today's bills, we are taking another step forward in our effort to eliminate the racial disparities in maternal and infant care. I am proud to sign these bills into law and commend my colleagues in the Legislature for their commitment to improve health outcomes for New Jersey's mothers, babies, and families."

"Our mission is to make New Jersey the safest place in the nation to give birth," **said First Lady Tammy Murphy**. "To achieve this, it is absolutely essential that mothers across all races, ethnicities, social and economic backgrounds are listened to and supported by federal, state and community resources. Today's legislation provides better care and support for our mothers and babies, and moves us closer to improving health outcomes for all of New Jersey's families."

The Governor signed the following four bills into law:

- **A5509 (Mosquera, Timberlake, Mukherji/Ruiz, Pou)** – Requires health benefits and Medicaid coverage for breastfeeding support.
- **S3159 (Weinberg, Greenstein/Vainieri Huttie, Reynolds-Jackson, Mukherji)** - Requires Medicaid coverage for pasteurized donated human breast milk under certain circumstances.
- **S484 (Vitale, Gill/ McKeon, Speight, Vainieri Huttie)** - Revises Newborn Screening program in the Department of Health.
- **S2133 (Cruz-Perez, Ruiz/Lampitt, Timberlake, Mosquera, Sumter, Tucker, Reynolds-Jackson)** - Mandates health benefits coverage for fertility preservation services under certain health insurance plans.

### **A5509**

"As parents of young children, each of us knows first-hand the challenges of raising a child and just how important it is to be able to receive the support you need. Under the ACA, Medicaid currently provides coverage for breastfeeding equipment and services. This new mandate would not only guarantee continued coverage for Medicaid recipients even if the ACA is dismantled at the federal level, but would also require all



New Jersey insurers to provide coverage for comprehensive lactation support. We are ensuring the health and well-being of mothers and their babies, while giving New Jersey parents one less expense to worry about as they care for their children," **said Assemblymembers Mosquera, Timberlake, and Mukherji.**

### **S3159**

"The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends breast milk as the exclusive source of nutrition for a child in their first six months of life," **said Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttle.** "In extending health coverage for donated breast milk, we can ensure it is available and affordable for all mothers seeking to breastfeed and boost positive health outcomes for their babies."

"Low-income families under Medicaid will now have the same access to breast milk as those under all other health coverage policies," **said Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson.** "With breastfeeding shown to have a protective effect against respiratory illnesses, ear infections, allergy development and other diseases, it is important to remove barriers and guarantee quality health care to all mothers and babies in need."

"As my wife and I recently experienced, milk production is not always as seamless post-delivery as you'd hope or expect, nor does it always last as long as desired," **Assemblyman Raj Mukherji.** "The coverage extended under this new law will be particularly important for parents with prematurely born babies or those babies who may need human breast milk for certain conditions for which formula is insufficient. As outcomes have shown, fortified breast milk can better provide the necessary nutrients for those in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit to greatly increase healthy growth and development. Income should not determine which New Jersey families can ensure the health of their babies."

### **S484**

"The importance of this type of advisory committee cannot be emphasized enough," **said Assemblyman McKeon.** "Its members would have both the experience and authority necessary to make recommendations to the Department of Health on screening technologies, treatment options, follow-up procedures and more. Their advice would help promote the well-being of newborns throughout the state."

"We must prioritize our children's health by utilizing the expertise of scientists, doctors and other educated professionals when it comes to congenital disorders," **said Assemblywoman Speight.** "Maintaining updated methods of screening for a wide array of biochemical disorders can help reduce the amount of morbidity, mortality and disability that would otherwise be caused by undetected health problems."

"Early diagnosis of a potential congenital disorder and access to early medical interventions can save parents and their children a lifetime of pain," **said Assemblywoman Vainieri Huttle.** "It's important for our state to do everything we can to make sure medical practitioners and parents are educated with standardized, up-to-date information on these disorders and how they can be both identified and treated."

### **S2133**

"Being diagnosed with a serious health condition and deciding to undergo major medical treatment is stressful enough without having to worry about potential infertility as a result of the treatment," **said Assemblywoman Lampitt.** "Having the option to utilize fertility services helps to provide patients with peace of mind and makes the decision to seek medical treatment a little easier."

"When someone requires a life-saving treatment, they shouldn't have to choose between daunting medical bills or never having a family," **said Assemblywoman Timberlake.** "Guaranteeing insurance coverage is one way we can help alleviate patients' financial concerns and allow them to make their decision based on what they want rather than what they can afford."

"As a mother, there is nothing in the world I value more than my children. Raising a child is such a rewarding experience," **said Assemblywoman Mosquera.** "This law will ensure that no one who dreams of being a parent will be denied that opportunity if there is any way for them to do so, regardless of their current health problems."

"Advancements in medical technology are providing patients with incredible alternatives they never would

have had in the past," **said Assemblywoman Sumter**. "If someone wants to start a family of their own someday but may soon face infertility, it's important we help them achieve their dream by guaranteeing coverage of these beneficial fertility preservation services."

"Everyone deserves the chance to form a family of their own," **said Assemblywoman Tucker**. "In the past, the kinds of treatment cancer patients receive would have severely limited their ability to do so – but that is no longer the case thanks to modern fertility preservation services. We must ensure their ability to use those services whenever necessary and desired."

"At a time when patients are coping with serious illnesses that can be both challenging and discouraging, knowing they can still have a family someday gives them hope," **said Assemblywoman Reynolds-Jackson**. "That kind of hope during such a difficult time is more powerful than many people can comprehend. This law will help patients focus on the possibilities of life."

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