

Governor Murphy and First Lady Tammy Murphy Announce Appointment of Lisa Asare As President and Chief Executive Officer of the New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority

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First in the Nation Maternal and Infant Health Cabinet Member in Governor Murphy's Cabinet

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy and First Lady Tammy Murphy today announced the appointment of Lisa Asare as the President and Chief Executive Officer of the [New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority](https://nj.gov/njmihia/). The announcement was made at the inaugural public board meeting held today in Trenton, which officially marked the launch of the Authority. The first of its kind in the nation Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority (MIHIA) is tasked with overseeing the New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center based in Trenton and will be the arm of government that continues the vital work of Nurture NJ past the Murphy Administration. This role will mark the beginning of a cabinet level role working on supporting maternal and infant health, the first of its kind in the nation.

"I am pleased to announce the appointment of Lisa Asare as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority," **said Governor Murphy**. "Lisa's track record in supporting mothers, babies, and families of our state over the past two plus decades makes her the ideal candidate to oversee our state's progression in the maternal and infant health space. I am certain her work leading the Authority will continue to move our state in the right direction for years to come."

"I've had the honor of working closely with Lisa Asare who has been instrumental to the success of our Nurture NJ initiative," **said First Lady Tammy Murphy**. "The Strategic Plan, which she co-authored, has been our guiding light in establishing New Jersey as a national model and gold standard for maternal and infant health. I cannot think of a better individual to lead the Authority, especially at such a crucial time as we move closer to breaking ground on the Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center in Trenton. The mothers and babies in our state are in the excellent hands with Lisa, who will make sure the critical work of Nurture NJ lives on well past our administration."

"Today's board meeting marks a major milestone in the years of work by countless partners who have dedicated themselves to improving maternal health across the state. In New Jersey, we respect and cherish women and mothers, and the work of this board serves as an expression of those values," **continued the First Lady**.

"It is my honor and privilege to be appointed as the first President and Chief Executive Officer of the MIHIA," **said Lisa Asare, incoming President and Chief Executive Officer**. "It has been my life's work to deliver programs focusing on the health and well-being of birthing individuals, children, and families. I am passionate about advocating for communities that face disparities and inequities not just related to maternal and infant health outcomes, but on all elements that are fundamental to living a full life. It is my honor and a full circle moment for me to step into this role and build on the momentum of so many maternal advocates across the state. I am incredibly grateful to Governor Murphy, First Lady Tammy Murphy, and board members for entrusting me with this opportunity to continue to serve the families of NJ in this new capacity. I look forward to delivering innovative approaches to birthing individuals, infants, and communities throughout New Jersey."

For over two decades, Lisa Asare has served in various roles in New Jersey public service at the Department of Health and the Department of Human Services. Most recently, Asare served as the Deputy Commissioner of Health Services, where she oversaw the Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services, which administers NJ FamilyCare, oversaw the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, and led the Department of Human Services' work on First Lady Tammy Murphy's Nurture NJ initiative. Additionally, Asare supported the Catastrophic Illness in Children's Relief Fund.

Previously, Asare served in the Department of Health as the Assistant Commissioner for the Division of Family Health Services, where she oversaw units that provide public health programs and services, including Maternal and Child Health, Special Child Health, Early Intervention Services, WIC Nutrition Services, and SNAP-Ed. It was in this role where she co-authored the First Lady's [Nurture NJ Maternal and Infant Health Strategic Plan](https://nurturenj.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/20210120-Nurture-NJ-Strategic-Plan.pdf) (<https://nurturenj.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/20210120-Nurture-NJ-Strategic-Plan.pdf>), which was unveiled in January 2021 and serves as a blueprint to make New Jersey the safest, most equitable state in the nation to deliver and raise a baby. Today's meeting moves us one step closer to implementing one of the more than 80 recommendations in the Strategic Plan, specifically:

1. **Recommendation 3.3** - Establish a Center in the state capital that focuses on innovation and research in maternal and infant health through partnerships with the state's academic, funder, business and faith communities.

Beyond her local and state efforts, Asare currently serves as the Board President of the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP).

Asare earned a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Toronto and a Master of Public Health degree from the Rutgers School of Biomedical and Health Sciences. She also received the Distinguished Alumni Award from the Rutgers School of Public Health, the President's Award from the NJ Public Health Association, and the 2023 Maternal and Child Health Bureau Director's Award from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

In July 2023, Governor Murphy signed the "New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center Act" (<https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562023/approved/20230717a.shtml>) to create the New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority. In December 2023, the Governor and First Lady announced the six public members (<https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562023/approved/20231213a.shtml>) and representatives from several state departments that will serve on the Authority's board, including:

1. Shakira Abdul-Ali, MSOD, Principal Managing Consultant/Owner, Alchemy Consulting, LLC, former Director, Trenton Dept of Health & Human Service
2. Rosalee Boyer, the First Lady of the Greater Mt. Zion African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church and co-founder of Salvation and Social Justice
3. Dr. Damali Campbell-Oparaji, Associate Professor, Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Health, Rutgers New Jersey Medical School and Physician in Obstetrics and Gynecology
4. Dr. Barbara George Johnson, Vice President of External Affairs and Urban Policy and Research, Kean University
5. Andrea Martinez-Mejia, Executive Director, Greater Newark Health Care Coalition
6. Maritza Raimundi-Petroski, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, Prevention Programs, and Community Engagement, Children's Home Society of New Jersey
7. Commissioner Sarah Adelman, New Jersey Department of Human Service
8. Commissioner Kaitlan Baston, New Jersey Department of Health
9. Dr. Brian Bridges, New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education
10. Holly Low, Director of the Office of Strategic Outreach and Policy, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development
11. Katherine Stoehr, First Deputy Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Children and Families
12. Tim Sullivan, CEO, New Jersey Economic Development Authority
13. Acting Commissioner Justin Zimmerman, New Jersey Department of Banking and Insurance
14. Dr. Philip Bonaparte, MD, Internal Medicine and Lead Pastor at New Hope Church of God

The first prime sponsors of P.L. 2023, c. 109 (https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2022/PL23/109_.PDF), ([https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://t.e2ma.net/click/byi8il/fd1rrbm/fhsnh8_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtbA!J4DaulTet7cdiApCGYD8EfWxK_3afxvXOUnJy0aZUsiZG241F0x0V6sy53Lwr0XbXelAyn03Q\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://t.e2ma.net/click/byi8il/fd1rrbm/fhsnh8_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtbA!J4DaulTet7cdiApCGYD8EfWxK_3afxvXOUnJy0aZUsiZG241F0x0V6sy53Lwr0XbXelAyn03Q$)), also known as the "New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center Act," were Senator Shirley Turner and Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson. The second prime sponsors of the bill were Senate Majority Leader M. Teresa Ruiz and Assemblywoman Shanique Speight.

"Lisa Asare's trajectory spans over two decades at the Department of Health, and her accomplishments there speak volumes to her commitment and passion for advancing women's health equity," **said Senate Majority Leader M. Teresa Ruiz**. "I look forward to Lisa Asare's leadership and offer my full support to help improve maternal health outcomes for all women in New Jersey."

"I congratulate Lisa Asare on her leadership appointment, and I am happy to see the Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority move forward," **said Senator Shirley Turner**. "This is a major step toward ensuring the health and success of all mothers and babies in our State. I am very pleased that our capital city will experience improved maternal and infant health outcomes and proud that it will be a hub for maternal care best practices that give babies in every community a healthy start in life."

"Lisa's in-depth knowledge of maternal and infant health issues, combined with her decades of experience as a public health executive, makes her the perfect choice to lead the Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority," **said Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson**. "Under Lisa's leadership, I am confident that the Authority will make significant strides in dismantling systemic barriers that exist for far too many mothers and babies of color."

"I am thrilled to see the appointment of Lisa Asare as the President and CEO of the newly established Authority, whose experience will be instrumental in executing innovative solutions to ensure better maternal and infant health outcomes, particularly among Black and Hispanic mothers and their babies," **said Assemblywoman Shanique Speight**. "With Lisa at the helm of the Authority, we will be taking bold steps toward reducing health care disparities in collaboration with communities, government entities and outside organizations."

For a photo of Lisa Asare, click [here](https://d31hzlhk6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20240327/9a/69/fc/58/13578be5e48141cc60ff4712/Lisa_Asare-9.jpg) (https://d31hzlhk6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20240327/9a/69/fc/58/13578be5e48141cc60ff4712/Lisa_Asare-9.jpg).

Governor Phil Murphy

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