

Governor Phil Murphy

# Governor Murphy Signs Executive Order Establishing Advisory Council on HIV, STIs, and Viral Hepatitis

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*Advisory Council will be led by the New Jersey Department of Health*

**TRENTON** – Governor Phil Murphy today signed Executive Order No. 381 establishing an Advisory Council on HIV, STIs, and Viral Hepatitis (Advisory Council) to help bolster the State's efforts to uplift public health. The Advisory Council will be responsible for coordinating initiatives designed to combat the HIV epidemic, the rising cases of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and viral hepatitis, and the risks of contracting such diseases through injection drug use.

The Advisory Council on HIV, STIs, and Viral Hepatitis, which will be led by the New Jersey Department of Health, repurposes the over 20-year-old Governor's Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS and Related Blood Borne Pathogens with a broader mission. The Advisory Council will now bring together government officials and members of the public with an updated mandate to tackle these pressing communicable disease threats to public health with specific attention to the disproportionate impact of HIV, STIs, and viral hepatitis on New Jersey's Black, Hispanic, Latino, and LGBTQIA+ communities.

This action is particularly timely as, in recent weeks, the federal government has removed critical public health information and services from federally maintained websites, threatening to impede the progress that has been made in combating these diseases as well as impacting the ability to treat those living with HIV/AIDS, STIs, and viral hepatitis.

"For decades, the State has been hard at work to combat the HIV epidemic and, while we have made progress, more work remains to prevent transmission and to support the long, healthy lives of those living with HIV/AIDS. My action today is prompted by the devastating, disproportionate impact of this disease in New Jersey's LGBTQIA+ communities and communities of color. Paired with the increasing threat of STIs and viral hepatitis, now more than ever it is critical to continue pursuing initiatives that will keep our state and residents healthy. We cannot waver when it comes to public health," **said Governor Murphy**. "I commend my predecessors for taking on this challenge and I am proud to underscore New Jersey's commitment to combat the spread of these often co-occurring diseases by establishing the Department of Health's Advisory Council on HIV, STIs, and Viral Hepatitis."

"HIV, STIs, and viral hepatitis are core public health issues," **said Health Commissioner Kaitlan Baston, MD, MSc, DFASAM**. "By bringing the Advisory Council under the Department of Health, we can efficiently coordinate efforts to deliver integrated care and support services to address these often-intertwined infections. Today, the Murphy Administration is strengthening our ability to more nimbly tackle these challenges, which we will do through high-level cooperation with the communities who need them most. As Health Commissioner, I also remind everyone that knowing your HIV status can be lifesaving for this treatable chronic disease."

The Advisory Council's main purposes are:

  
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- Coordinating efforts among public and private health care agencies and providers, community-based organizations, and other strategic partners to promote public awareness and education on the prevention and treatment of HIV, STIs, and viral hepatitis and how to access related services in New Jersey;
- Identifying or developing opportunities or strategies that may be used to combat the HIV epidemic, STIs, and viral hepatitis, including, but not limited to, efforts to implement the [Strategic Plan to End the HIV Epidemic in New Jersey by 2025](https://www.nj.gov/health/hiv/about/ending-the-hiv-epidemic/) (<https://www.nj.gov/health/hiv/about/ending-the-hiv-epidemic/>); and
- Recommending policies, projects, programs, initiatives, or services designed to improve health outcomes and reduce health outcome disparities, including efforts to address systemic inequities affecting HIV, STI, and viral hepatitis health care.

Through New Jersey's End the HIV Epidemic Plan, the State is committed to reducing the number of new HIV infections, expanding access to HIV testing, and promoting access and linkage to care for individuals diagnosed with HIV.

The Advisory Council will be chaired by the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Health or their designee and will consist of senior officials from across state government whose responsibilities are crucial to supporting public health.

The Senate President and Assembly Speaker will each be responsible for recommending two members of their Legislative bodies and the Commissioner of Health will appoint a minimum of 25 public members – including public health care professionals, policy experts, social and direct care organization representatives, advocates and individuals who have lived experience with HIV, STDs, or viral hepatitis – to serve on the Advisory Council.

Executive Order No. 381 rescinds [Executive Order No. 61 \(2003\)](https://nj.gov/infobank/circular/eom61.htm) (<https://nj.gov/infobank/circular/eom61.htm>). For a copy of Executive Order No. 38, click [here](https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/pdf/EO-381.pdf) (<https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/pdf/EO-381.pdf>).

## Governor Phil Murphy

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