

Governor Phil Murphy

# Governor Murphy Highlights New Jersey's Progress in Protecting and Expanding Access to Reproductive Health Care

10/11/2023

*Announces Next Step in Expanding Access to Hormonal Contraceptives*

**TRENTON** – Governor Phil Murphy today joined legislative and community partners in highlighting progress the State has made over the past year in protecting reproductive rights and expanding access to reproductive health care. From funding for reproductive health care providers to the advancement of rules that will facilitate easier access to contraception and abortion services, New Jersey continues to prioritize reproductive freedoms that are under attack around the country.

“New Jersey is a state that continues to stand for the fundamental right to make one’s own reproductive choices,” **said Governor Murphy**. “Understanding that rights without access mean nothing, my Administration is also working with our partners to remove barriers to the family planning tools individuals need to make these crucial and deeply personal decisions. No matter what steps other states may take to restrict access to reproductive health care, New Jersey will never stop fighting to defend these freedoms.”

“While other states are taking away rights, making it harder to access reproductive health care, we are doing everything in our power to make reproductive care more accessible, and more affordable, for every family,” **said Lieutenant Governor Tahesha Way**. “I look forward to 2024, when every woman will be able to walk into a New Jersey pharmacy and purchase contraceptives without a prescription.”

“As many states across the nation seek to limit access to reproductive health care – including contraceptives – I am proud that New Jersey continues to protect our fundamental rights to reproductive freedom and autonomy,” **said First Lady Tammy Murphy**. “Today marks an important step forward in our efforts to promote health equity and ease of access to contraceptives. In New Jersey, we will continue to advocate for reproductive rights and allow individuals the freedom to decide when to start a family.”

Once finalized, rule proposals recently advanced by the State Board of Medical Examiners (BME) and Board of Pharmacy (BOP) will make it easier for both New Jersey residents and visitors to access reproductive health services and resources in our state.

A joint rule proposal from the BME and BOP, which will advance after a vote by the BME today, will enable pharmacists to safely provide self-administered hormonal contraceptives to patients without a prescription. These rules’ procedures aim to ensure pharmacists are equipped with training and protocols to provide appropriate counseling and screening for patients seeking contraceptive pills, patches, and rings without a prescription.

The boards’ rule proposal implements [legislation](#)

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Another rule proposal the BME advanced a few weeks prior will establish the regulatory framework for Certified Nurse Midwives and Certified Midwives to perform first trimester abortions safely and effectively, which will help expand the pool of providers able to offer these services.

Recognizing the possibility of increased demand for reproductive health services as a result of other states restricting access to this care, the Governor and Legislature have also appropriated funding in the Fiscal Year 2024 (FY2024) budget to help reproductive health care providers in New Jersey expand their capabilities and protect against possible threats. This funding includes over \$30 million for family planning services. It also includes \$5 million for security upgrades [grants](#)

([https://urldefense.com/v3/\\_https://t.e2ma.net/click/7ice6j/nrddit/j0x745\\_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!K3Bm69VpfgW5ubEwQ0QW\\_Ak2zbF566y-p3buRITQaKqWwjzSlsvu2N-m1ljBxm2yhGnsMWq7\\_o6xlaLVjtxbDZ5\\_SQjI\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://t.e2ma.net/click/7ice6j/nrddit/j0x745_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!K3Bm69VpfgW5ubEwQ0QW_Ak2zbF566y-p3buRITQaKqWwjzSlsvu2N-m1ljBxm2yhGnsMWq7_o6xlaLVjtxbDZ5_SQjI$)) and \$10 million to provide reproductive health care providers with zero-interest, forgivable loans for facility upgrades. [Applications](#) ([https://urldefense.com/v3/\\_https://t.e2ma.net/click/7ice6j/nrddit/zsy745\\_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!K3Bm69VpfgW5ubEwQ0QW\\_Ak2zbF566y-p3buRITQaKqWwjzSlsvu2N-m1ljBxm2yhGnsMWq7\\_o6xlaLVjtxbDfKVMdIX\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://t.e2ma.net/click/7ice6j/nrddit/zsy745_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!K3Bm69VpfgW5ubEwQ0QW_Ak2zbF566y-p3buRITQaKqWwjzSlsvu2N-m1ljBxm2yhGnsMWq7_o6xlaLVjtxbDfKVMdIX$)) for the next cycle of the Reproductive Health Security Grant Program are open through October 31.

To ensure greater health coverage, the FY2024 budget also newly allocated funding to increase Medicaid payment rate increases for reproductive health services. The New Jersey Department of Banking and Insurance also initiated rulemaking earlier this year to begin requiring coverage for abortion services without exceptions for each of the health plans regulated by the Department.

“We thank Governor Murphy and our lawmakers for this critically important legislation that furthers New Jersey’s commitment to reproductive freedom,” **said Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin**. “As evidenced by the rulemaking efforts of the Board of Pharmacy and the Board of Medical Examiners, we are working hard to ensure that the promise of this law—increased access to hormonal contraceptives and a patient-centered approach to reproductive care—becomes the reality in New Jersey.”

"New Jersey's leadership to increase access to hormonal contraceptives without a prescription reduces barriers and empowers individuals to make informed decisions about their health," **said Acting Health Commissioner Dr. Kaitlan Baston**. "These efforts help protect the rights of individuals by improving access to reproductive health options."

To represent New Jersey's commitment to defending reproductive rights, Governor Murphy also joined a historic, multi-state [Reproductive Freedom Alliance](https://urldefense.com/v3/https://t.e2ma.net/click/7ice6j/nrddit/flz745_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!K3Bm69VpfgW5ubEwQ0QW_Ak2zbF566y-p3buRITQaKqWwjzSlsvu2N-m1ljBxm2yhGnsMWq7_o6xlaLVjtxbDV9G5BKK$) ([https://urldefense.com/v3/https://t.e2ma.net/click/7ice6j/nrddit/flz745\\_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!K3Bm69VpfgW5ubEwQ0QW\\_Ak2zbF566y-p3buRITQaKqWwjzSlsvu2N-m1ljBxm2yhGnsMWq7\\_o6xlaLVjtxbDV9G5BKK\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/https://t.e2ma.net/click/7ice6j/nrddit/flz745_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!K3Bm69VpfgW5ubEwQ0QW_Ak2zbF566y-p3buRITQaKqWwjzSlsvu2N-m1ljBxm2yhGnsMWq7_o6xlaLVjtxbDV9G5BKK$)), earlier this year to work with other like-minded governors to protect and expand reproductive freedoms in the participating states.

Each of these efforts build upon a number of other steps Governor Murphy and has taken alongside legislative and community partners since the Governor first signed the [Freedom of Reproductive Choice Act](https://urldefense.com/v3/https://t.e2ma.net/click/7ice6j/nrddit/vd0745_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!K3Bm69VpfgW5ubEwQ0QW_Ak2zbF566y-p3buRITQaKqWwjzSlsvu2N-m1ljBxm2yhGnsMWq7_o6xlaLVjtxbDY74cfiS$) ([https://urldefense.com/v3/https://t.e2ma.net/click/7ice6j/nrddit/vd0745\\_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!K3Bm69VpfgW5ubEwQ0QW\\_Ak2zbF566y-p3buRITQaKqWwjzSlsvu2N-m1ljBxm2yhGnsMWq7\\_o6xlaLVjtxbDY74cfiS\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/https://t.e2ma.net/click/7ice6j/nrddit/vd0745_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!K3Bm69VpfgW5ubEwQ0QW_Ak2zbF566y-p3buRITQaKqWwjzSlsvu2N-m1ljBxm2yhGnsMWq7_o6xlaLVjtxbDY74cfiS$)), in January 2022. Other action has included:

- Enacting [protections](https://urldefense.com/v3/https://t.e2ma.net/click/7ice6j/nrddit/b60745_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!K3Bm69VpfgW5ubEwQ0QW_Ak2zbF566y-p3buRITQaKqWwjzSlsvu2N-m1ljBxm2yhGnsMWq7_o6xlaLVjtxbDQ4RCJ2d$) ([https://urldefense.com/v3/https://t.e2ma.net/click/7ice6j/nrddit/b60745\\_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!K3Bm69VpfgW5ubEwQ0QW\\_Ak2zbF566y-p3buRITQaKqWwjzSlsvu2N-m1ljBxm2yhGnsMWq7\\_o6xlaLVjtxbDQ4RCJ2d\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/https://t.e2ma.net/click/7ice6j/nrddit/b60745_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!K3Bm69VpfgW5ubEwQ0QW_Ak2zbF566y-p3buRITQaKqWwjzSlsvu2N-m1ljBxm2yhGnsMWq7_o6xlaLVjtxbDQ4RCJ2d$)) for reproductive health care providers and out-of-state residents seeking reproductive services in New Jersey;
- Creating a ['Reproductive Rights Strike Force'](https://urldefense.com/v3/https://t.e2ma.net/click/7ice6j/nrddit/ry1745_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!K3Bm69VpfgW5ubEwQ0QW_Ak2zbF566y-p3buRITQaKqWwjzSlsvu2N-m1ljBxm2yhGnsMWq7_o6xlaLVjtxbDTPcmMxH$) ([https://urldefense.com/v3/https://t.e2ma.net/click/7ice6j/nrddit/ry1745\\_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!K3Bm69VpfgW5ubEwQ0QW\\_Ak2zbF566y-p3buRITQaKqWwjzSlsvu2N-m1ljBxm2yhGnsMWq7\\_o6xlaLVjtxbDTPcmMxH\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/https://t.e2ma.net/click/7ice6j/nrddit/ry1745_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!K3Bm69VpfgW5ubEwQ0QW_Ak2zbF566y-p3buRITQaKqWwjzSlsvu2N-m1ljBxm2yhGnsMWq7_o6xlaLVjtxbDTPcmMxH$)) to initiate civil and criminal enforcement actions and develop strategic initiatives to protect access to reproductive health care on behalf of residents from New Jersey and other states, including through guidance to State licensing boards, to health care providers and other licensees, and to consumers on patient and provider rights; and
- Making [funding](https://urldefense.com/v3/https://t.e2ma.net/click/7ice6j/nrddit/7q2745_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!K3Bm69VpfgW5ubEwQ0QW_Ak2zbF566y-p3buRITQaKqWwjzSlsvu2N-m1ljBxm2yhGnsMWq7_o6xlaLVjtxbDbtvm9fq$) ([https://urldefense.com/v3/https://t.e2ma.net/click/7ice6j/nrddit/7q2745\\_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!K3Bm69VpfgW5ubEwQ0QW\\_Ak2zbF566y-p3buRITQaKqWwjzSlsvu2N-m1ljBxm2yhGnsMWq7\\_o6xlaLVjtxbDbtvm9fq\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/https://t.e2ma.net/click/7ice6j/nrddit/7q2745_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!K3Bm69VpfgW5ubEwQ0QW_Ak2zbF566y-p3buRITQaKqWwjzSlsvu2N-m1ljBxm2yhGnsMWq7_o6xlaLVjtxbDbtvm9fq$)) available to Rutgers University to create and implement the "New Jersey Reproductive Training and Education Initiative."

"The implementation of this groundbreaking legislation reaffirms New Jersey's unwavering commitment to women's reproductive health and autonomy," **said Senator Turner**. "Since women are often juggling the demands of jobs and family responsibilities, going through the hassle, time, and expense of seeing a doctor for a birth control prescription can be challenging. Removing this barrier to contraceptives will help to make them more accessible to all women.. We now join 20 states, the District of Columbia, and more than 100 countries around the world in freeing the pill, so that women can obtain birth control without a prescription."

"Today's announcement furthers our work to ensure all New Jerseyans have the power to decide their present and their future," **said Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson**. "We know that starting a family is a big decision. Expanding access to hormonal contraceptives gives more women and families control over when and if they choose to have a child. Thank you to the Board of Pharmacy and the Board of Medical Examiners for voting to establish a new rule to help with the implementation of my legislation."

"With the action announced today, we are tearing down roadblocks to contraception for women statewide," **said Assemblywoman Angela McKnight**. "Not only will this safeguard a woman's ability to access the contraception of her own choosing, but it also reinforces New Jersey's commitment to reproductive care. Self-autonomy over a woman's body is sacrosanct, and I am proud to stand with Governor Murphy, my fellow legislators, and reproductive rights advocates on such an important issue."

"While extremists on the Supreme Court and in other state legislatures are targeting the rights of women to bodily autonomy and access to reproductive healthcare, our state has taken a firm stance against the erosion of the rights of New Jerseyans," **said Assemblyman Raj Mukherji**. "As we continue to break down barriers to accessing healthcare and reproductive care, this progress on implementing A4149 brings us one step closer to simplifying access to contraception for more women, allowing them to decide their own futures."

"My body, my choice' is more than a slogan – it's a fundamental right that needs to continue for all women," **said Assemblywoman Britnee N. Timberlake**. "In a post-Dobbs America, it is more important than ever that we empower women to have autonomy over their bodies, and broadening access to hormonal contraception is an important step. This is one more way that New Jersey is leading the fight for reproductive freedoms."

"Here in New Jersey, leaders like Governor Murphy and champions in the state legislature have sought to protect reproductive rights and improve access to the full range of reproductive health care," **said Jackie Cornell, Executive Director of Planned Parenthood Action Fund of New Jersey**. "As we continue to face a reality where rights and freedoms are under attack in other states, New Jersey continues to be a beacon of hope for us all."

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[Home \(/governor/\)](/governor/)

[Administration](#)

[Governor Phil Murphy \(/governor/admin/about\)](/governor/admin/about)

[Lt. Governor Tahesha Way \(/governor/admin/lt\)](/governor/admin/lt)

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[Environment \(/governor/initiatives/#Environment\)](/governor/initiatives/#Environment)  
[Health \(/governor/initiatives/#Health\)](/governor/initiatives/#Health)  
[Law & Justice \(/governor/initiatives/#Justice\)](/governor/initiatives/#Justice)  
[Transportation \(/governor/initiatives/#Transportation\)](/governor/initiatives/#Transportation)

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[Advice and Consent Appointments \(/governor/news/acappointments\)](/governor/news/acappointments)  
[Statements on Legislation \(/governor/news/statements/approved/statements\\_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml)  
[Administration Reports \(/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml)  
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