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Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Announces Members of Health Care Affordability Advisory Group

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TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today announced members to the New Jersey Health Care Affordability Advisory Group. The committee, established under Executive Order No. 217, is comprised of members across hospitals, providers, employers, consumer advocates, and policy leaders. The Advisory Group's objective is to advise the Health Care Affordability Interagency Workgroup, Chaired by the Director of the Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency, Shabnam Salih, on the development and implementation of health care cost growth benchmarks. The benchmarks provide an opportunity for increased oversight and accountability and will further advance the Administration's efforts to provide more accessible, affordable, and transparent health care to New Jerseyans and their families.

"Equitable and affordable access to health care services are critical now more than ever for our residents and businesses," **said Governor Murphy**. "The Health Care Affordability Advisory Group brings together a diverse and talented team that will continue to build on our efforts to improve access to high-quality, affordable health care for all New Jerseyans."

"The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the crucial work needed to address health care affordability," **said Shabnam Salih, Director of the Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency**. "With the tremendous expertise of our Advisory Group members and their guidance, we are taking the next step forward to ensure a more accessible, affordable, and transparent health care system for our residents."

Members of the New Jersey Health Care Affordability Advisory Group include the following individuals:

- Dr. Raj Brahmbhatt, Chief Medical Officer of the Riverside Medical Group
- Cathy Bennett, President and CEO of the New Jersey Hospital Association
- Maura Collinsgru, Health Care Program Director at New Jersey Citizen Action
- Patrick Davish, Associate Vice President of Global Pricing & Reimbursement at Merck & Co., Inc
- Robert C. Garrett, CEO of Hackensack Meridian Health
- Dr. John Kulin, Representative for Medical Society of New Jersey
- Dr. Jeffrey Le Benger, CEO of the Summit Medical Group
- Mitchell Livingston, President and CEO of New Jersey Manufacturers Insurance Company
- Mike Munoz, AmeriHealth New Jersey Market President
- Victor Murray, Director of Field Building and Resources at the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers
- Linda Nilsen, Assistant Vice President for Human Resources at Princeton University
- Kevin M. O'Dowd, Co-Chief Executive Officer of Cooper University Health Care
- Barry Ostrowsky, President and CEO of RWJBarnabas Health
- Dennis Pullin, President and CEO of Virtua Health
- Ward Sanders, President of the New Jersey Association of Health Plans
- Tony Sandkamp, CEO of Sandkamp Wordworks, LLC
- Linda Schwimmer, President and CEO of the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute
- Joe Sheridan, President and COO of Wakefern Food Corp.
- Kevin Slavin, President and CEO at St. Joseph's Health
- Gary St. Hilaire, President of Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield

To learn more about the Health Care Affordability Advisory Group, click here. (https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/t.e2ma.net/click/jga4ae/j83xrcb/nrpawn__;!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtbA!bIFzVCo19FIsJ55uMDbNzkQbgWx3Y1D0NfpR7DfNsWujCAVnTgu7qCC9X33cyAru4oZ0DZiS$)

"I have devoted my career to improving the access, quality, and affordability of care for New Jersey's most vulnerable," **said**

Zeyad Baker, President and CEO of the Riverside Medical Group. "Born in Hudson County, trained in Pediatrics in Newark, and as CEO of Riverside Medical Group - the welfare of the children and their families of my home state is my life's mission. I am happy to have the opportunity to further this cause through this Group."

"We applaud the Governor for prioritizing the delivery of quality, accessible, and affordable healthcare to our underserved communities," **said Cathy Bennet, President of the New Jersey Hospital Association**. "Our members are at the forefront of advancing issues of equity and addressing the socioeconomic disparities that prevent too many New Jersey residents from receiving the care they need."

"Many New Jersey families continue to struggle with the cost of health care**," said Maura Collinsgru, Health Care Program Director at the New Jersey Citizen Action Citizen Action**. "We are honored to join the Governor in this effort to address costs across the health care system in an honest and transparent way. Doing so will help us achieve our shared goal of ensuring every New Jerseyan has access to the care they need."

"It is an honor to join Governor Murphy's Health Care Affordability Advisory Board and work with leaders across New Jersey to advance the most critical health issues affecting families and communities in our state," **said Robert C. Garrett, CEO, Hackensack Meridian Health**. "At Hackensack Meridian Health we are committed to delivering high-quality, affordable and convenient health care, and we stand with Governor Murphy and his efforts to make our state's health care system more accessible, affordable and transparent for everyone."

"Physicians believe transparency is key in the reduction of processes that add additional costs to healthcare," **said John Kulin, representative of the Medical Society of New Jersey**. "Increased transparency and accountability will assist physicians in the delivery of quality care while ensuring patients can afford the services they may require. I am eager to serve on the Advisory Group and assist the Office of Health Care Accountability and Transparency in support of these efforts."

"On behalf of Summit CityMD, I am honored to serve on the Health Care Affordability Advisory Group. In today's health care landscape, where care is fragmented and costly, high-quality value-based care is imperative in improving health care delivery, managing costs, and promoting greater quality and health outcomes," **said Jeffrey Le Benger, MD, Chief Executive Officer, Summit CityMD**. "I look forward to participating in this important initiative."

"For 107 years, NJM has provided comprehensive benefits to our 2,500 employees as they work to provide extraordinary service to our policyholders," **said Mitchell A. Livingston, President and Chief Executive Officer of the NJM Insurance Group**. "We understand that healthcare affordability is an issue that continues to challenge businesses across New Jersey and look forward to working with Governor Murphy and the stakeholders to develop solutions that will contain costs and promote coverage."

"As a health care company exclusively dedicated to the people and communities across the Garden State, we're pleased that Governor Murphy is focused on the stability of New Jersey's health insurance market," **said Mike Munoz, AmeriHealth New Jersey Market President**. "I look forward to continuing to actively participate in that conversation as a member of the Health Care Affordability Advisory Group."

"The Coronavirus pandemic has amplified the importance of affordable and equitable access to health care services while shining a light on inequalities and disparities in health care, specifically black and brown communities," **said Victor Murray, Director of Field Building and Resources at the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers**. "I am excited to be a part of the Governor's advisory group that holds ourselves accountable and shapes policies that can improve the healthcare system for all NJ residents."

"Now more than ever people should be focused on staying well rather than how they will be able to afford health care if they get sick. Employees fortunate enough to have health coverage continue to see a significant and growing percentage of their paychecks going to pay for health care premiums and deductibles even before they access any health care services," **said Kevin O'Dowd, Co-CEO of Cooper University Health Care**. "People are rightfully worried, and I am honored to be invited to join Governor Murphy's Health Care Affordability Advisory Group to combat the unsustainable rate of growth of health care costs in the state."

"RWJBarnabas Health is committed to ensuring that health care is not only of the highest quality, but also more affordable for all**," said Barry H. Ostrowsky, President and CEO, RWJBarnabas Health**. "We are delighted and honored to serve on the Health Care Affordability Advisory Group and look forward to supporting the Governor's constant efforts to improve the lives of all those who live in our State."

"Health systems have an obligation to care for the most vulnerable members of our community, notably children, seniors, and those who face systemic barriers to care," **said Dennis W. Pullin, FACHE, President and CEO of Virtua Health**. "The Health Care Affordability Advisory Group will allow leaders across New Jersey to combine their energy and experience to evolve our industry in a necessary – and inspiring – way."
"NJAHP supported the Governor's establishment of the Health Care Affordability Advisory Group, and I am honored to be included on the Board with other health care leaders in the State**," said Ward Sanders, President of the New Jersey Association of Health Plans.** "Affordability remains a major barrier to access to care for far too many New Jersey residents. I look forward to this multi-stakeholder effort to combat affordability challenges."

" As the owner of a small business, I look forward to adding my voice to the Administrations' effort to establish greater health care affordability and transparency," **said Tony Sandkamp, President of Sandkamp Woodworks LLC**. "I believe we can make a difference not only for the businesses in New Jersey, but for all those who live and work in our great State."

"I am honored to be joining this Group and look forward to working with the state and colleagues on the fundamentals, as well as innovations, to reduce health care spending and make coverage more affordable for everyone," **said Linda J. Schwimmer, President and CEO of the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute.**

"I look forward to working with Governor Murphy and my fellow board members to explore new ways to improve and expand affordable, high quality health care for the residents of New Jersey," **said Joe Sheridan, President and COO of Wakefern Food Corp**. "As a leader in the supermarket industry and one of the state's largest employers, we know how important access to quality healthcare is for our associates, customers and to the future of our state."

"As we fight our way out of the COVID19 pandemic, there is no more important endeavor than to now address the affordability and accessibility of healthcare for all New Jersey residents," **said Kevin Slavin, President and CEO at St. Joseph's Health.** "I applaud Governor Murphy for his foresight in establishing the HealthCare Affordability Advisory Group and look forward to working with other industry leaders in making meaningful changes that will directly benefit families across our state."

"On behalf of our 3.6 million members, I appreciate the opportunity to be part of the Health Care Affordability Advisory Group," **said Gary D. St. Hilaire, President and CEO Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey**. "I am excited to collaborate with other leaders across our state to develop consensus on meaningful solutions that make health care more affordable."

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