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What's Included In This Edition:

Schwimmer Script - Guest Author Kate Shamszad, MS, MPH, CCLS, Quality Institute's Vice President of Policy

Take Five Interview - Denise Anderson, PhD, MPH, Executive Director of the Center for Health Equity & Wellbeing

Help Us Expand Our Education Council

Upcoming Events -

- Member Breakfast and Engagement Event 2/3
- Quality Improvement Virtual Learning Session, 2026 Leapfrog Survey Updates, and Celebration of NJ Quality Teams 2/5

BAYADA Scholars Program: Accelerating New Jersey's Nursing Workforce

Welcome, New Member - Latin American Legal Defense and Education Fund (LALDEF)

A graphic for the 'Schwimmer Script' section. It features a circular portrait of Kate Shamszad on the left. To the right, the text 'Schwimmer Script' is written in a large, bold, dark blue font, with a stylized pen nib icon to the right of 'Script'. Below this, her name and title are listed: 'Kate Shamszad, MS, MPH, CCLS' and 'Vice President of Policy'. At the bottom right is the Quality Institute logo and name.

Advancing Maternal and Infant Health: Progress Made, Work Ahead

Tomorrow is [Maternal Health Awareness Day](#), established to highlight the urgent need to improve maternal health outcomes, address persistent racial and ethnic disparities, and ensure that every person who gives birth receives safe, high-quality, and respectful care — before, during, and after pregnancy.

At the Quality Institute, we have invested significantly in building alliances, developing strategic plans, and advancing policy and practice changes to improve maternal and infant health. This far-reaching work has required sustained collaboration across State agencies, health systems, community organizations, and advocates. Through our efforts and the work of so many others, New Jersey has made meaningful progress. At the same time, more work is needed to ensure these efforts translate into lasting, equitable outcomes for families across the state.

[NurtureNJ](#), the state’s comprehensive initiative to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity — led by former First Lady Tammy Murphy — has shaped the progress we’ve seen in our state. We are pleased the Sherrill Administration has reaffirmed this commitment through the reappointment of the Maternal Infant Health Innovation Authority (MIHIA) leadership and a clear focus on advancing maternal and infant health policy and systems statewide.

The recently published Rutgers School of Public Health and Quality Institute report, “[Turning Policy into Progress: How New Jersey Is Advancing Maternal and Infant Health](#),” summarizes substantial impact to date, reviewing the implementation of 72 maternal and infant health laws and highlighting progress. It also outlines opportunities to close gaps and further strengthen systems of care across the state...

[Read Full Story](#)

[Take MAP Survey](#)

TAKE FIVE INTERVIEW

Denise Anderson, PhD, MPH
Executive Director, The Center for Health Equity & Wellbeing



Interviews with members, influencers, and noteworthy people

Denise Anderson, PhD, MPH, is the inaugural Executive Director of the [Center for Health Equity & Wellbeing – New Jersey’s Public Health Institute](#).

Interview Sneak Peek: *How will the center advance fairness to improve health care for all New Jerseyans?*

We’re looking at critical health care policies through a health equity lens. That means examining potential unintended consequences and identifying what’s missing. What policies or programs must be introduced to address the root causes of systemic inequities?

Another essential part of our work is community power sharing. Too often, public health takes a top-down approach: experts decide what needs to happen and then tell communities what to do. We’re turning that around by co-designing, co-managing, and co-evaluating public health strategies with community members themselves.

We’re also focused on supporting community-based organizations that typically operate without major investment. These groups often address interconnected issues such as economic stability, education, environmental health, and housing—factors that deeply affect health. We’re helping them build capacity through training, technical assistance, and funding so they can continue leading change where it

matters most...

[Read Full Interview](#)



HELP US EXPAND OUR EDUCATION COUNCIL

Our [Education Council](#) brings together academic institutions from across New Jersey to inform and strengthen our work through shared expertise, diverse perspectives, and expansive professional networks. If your institution or another academic organization you work closely with would be a strong fit, we encourage you to share our new Education Council Benefits flyer.

We are particularly interested in [engaging institutions and academic leaders who bring a wide range of experiences and voices](#) to our work.

[Learn More](#)



Please join the Quality Institute on Tuesday, February 3, 8 – 9:30 a.m., for a [Member Breakfast and Engagement Event](#) at [The Cooperative](#), 808 Market Street, 3rd Floor, in Camden.

Start your morning with a quick breakfast while networking with local leaders and health care decision makers. Hear brief updates from Quality Institute staff about how to get involved in our policy, quality improvement, and community health work.

[Register today](#) to maximize your membership value.

This event is for members and invited guests only.

[Register Now](#)



NEW JERSEY HEALTH CARE
QUALITY INSTITUTE
**QUALITY IMPROVEMENT VIRTUAL
LEARNING SESSION, 2026**
I FAPFROG SURVEY UPDATES &



CELEBRATION OF NEW JERSEY QUALITY TEAMS



Shannon Kooker,
MSN, RN, CPPS,
CIC, CPHQ, FAPIC

Executive Director,
ECRI's Total Systems
Safety



Lydia Weber,
DNP, ANP-BC,
HNP, RN, LSSBB

VP, Chief Patient Safety
Officer & HRO, Hackensack
Meridian Health



Missy Danforth

Senior Vice President,
Health Care Ratings at
The Leapfrog Group



Adelisa Perez-
Hudgins, MSN, RN

Vice President of Quality,
New Jersey Health Care
Quality Institute

Thursday,
February 5 @
7:30am - 8:30am

REGISTER NOW



The New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute invites you to its [Quality Improvement Virtual Learning Session, 2026 Leapfrog Survey Updates, and Celebration of NJ Quality Teams](#). Join us virtually on Thursday, February 5, from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m., to:

- Hear from subject matter experts on the patient safety risks of dismissing patient, family, and caregiver concerns.
- Gain insights into actions hospitals can take to improve their responses to patient and family concerns and to prevent harm.
- Learn about the [2026 changes to the Leapfrog Hospital and ASC Survey](#) from [Melissa Danforth, Senior Vice President of Health Care Ratings, The Leapfrog Group](#)
- Recognize and celebrate New Jersey quality improvement professionals working to strengthen patient safety and provide the highest quality of care.

This Session Is For:

- [Health Care providers](#) and [leaders](#) working to improve patient safety within their organizations and the communities they serve;
- [Health Care Quality team members](#) supporting quality improvement initiatives and the Leapfrog Hospital and ASC Survey; and
- [Health Plans, Employers, Purchasers, Advocates](#), and others working to improve patient safety.

Register Here

BAYADA SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Accelerating New Jersey's Nursing Workforce

Our member, [Thomas Edison State University \(TESU\)](#), has partnered with a New Jersey health system and BAYADA Education Inc. to launch the [BAYADA Scholars Program](#), an accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing pathway designed to help address the nursing workforce shortage. The 15-month, hybrid program prepares individuals with a Bachelor's degree or prior college coursework for careers as registered nurses through online courses and immersive clinical training.

Hospitals or health care organizations interested in learning more about the BAYADA Scholars Program partnership opportunities with TESU and BAYADA Education can contact Dennis Devery, Vice President, at ddevery@tesu.edu.

Partnership Opportunities

NEW MEMBER



WELCOME

The [Latin American Legal Defense and Education Fund \(LALDEF\)](#) promotes the rights of all immigrants; facilitates access to health care, education and legal representation; advocates for the integration of immigrants; and fosters intercultural communication to strengthen communities.



For information on how to join, please contact Virginia Tesser at vtesser@njhcqi.org.

To learn more about our current initiatives, please visit our website at www.njhcqi.org.

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Our mailing address is:

New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute
P.O. Box 2246, Princeton, New Jersey 08543

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