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NEW JERSEY HEALTH CARE QUALITY INSTITUTE



A BI-WEEKLY LOOK AT THE BUSINESS & POLITICS OF
HEALTH CARE IN NEW JERSEY

What's Included In This Edition:

[Schwimmer Script](#) - A Budget to Strengthen New Jersey's Health Care System

[Take Five Interview](#) - Mia Connolly, New Jersey Market Director at Oscar Health

[Register for Quality Institute Spring Reception 5/12](#)

[Mayors Wellness Campaign \(MWC\)](#) - Community Health Hub

[Visit Us at AMCHP 2026 Conference](#)

[Welcome, New Member](#) - Vimo®



A Budget to Strengthen New Jersey's Health Care System

In her recent preview of the upcoming state budget, Governor Mikie Sherrill addressed the "serious structural deficit" facing New Jersey—a projected \$3 billion gap exacerbated by the expiration of pandemic-era funds and looming federal cuts. The Governor rightly noted that "tough choices" are ahead to achieve a balanced budget without raising taxes.

As we navigate these fiscal pressures, however, we must be strategic. To maintain access to essential health services that provide long-term individual and societal benefits, budget reductions should not target primary and preventive care. Instead, New Jersey must spend smarter. Shifting our focus and funding toward foundational care, including primary and preventive care, and oral health, is a proactive strategy to improve outcomes and reduce the growing long-term cost of poor health that drives our deficits.

Addressing the Investment Gap

Data from the Quality Institute and other sources highlights why this shift is necessary. Despite the [proven benefits of a primary care focused model](#), New Jersey continues to underinvest in this sector:

- **National Rankings:** New Jersey currently [ranks 49th](#) among states in primary care investment and [46th](#) in number of active primary care providers per 100,000 residents.
- **System Strains:** We [rank 41st](#) in preventable hospitalizations, often because patients lack a "medical home" for ongoing or post discharge care.
- **Reimbursement Disparities:** As of 2024, we [rank 49th](#) among states for Medicaid primary care parity to Medicare. Recent changes to address the disparity have been weak and limited, with Medicaid increasing a limited number of primary care rates from 50% to 70% of Medicare rates. There is [widespread agreement](#) on the necessity of comprehensive primary care rate increases to 100% of Medicare rates.

Aligning with the Sherrill-Caldwell Transition Vision

The Governor's emphasis on smarter spending aligns with the recommendations from the Sherrill-Caldwell Transition Action Teams. The report, "[Affordable Healthcare: Addressing Washington's Medicaid Cuts,](#)" advocates for bolstering the health care workforce and strengthening primary care in clinical and community based settings along with other long called-for changes in plan design and payment...

[Read Full Story](#)



Interviews with members, influencers, and noteworthy people

[Oscar Health](#) is a member of the [Quality Institute's Plan Council](#).

Interview Sneak Peek: *Oscar is a strong proponent of Individual Coverage Health Reimbursement Arrangements, or ICHRAs. What are they and why are they a good option for employers and employees?*

An [ICHRA](#) is an employer-sponsored insurance mechanism that empowers employees to make their own health care choices. Employers provide a defined, tax-free monthly contribution that employees use to select a plan on the individual marketplace.

Unlike traditional employer coverage, which typically offers only two or three options, employees can choose any plan available on the marketplace. For employers, costs are predictable and manageable. ICHRAs can help control and stabilize health care expenses, particularly for small businesses. The individual market is the largest risk pool and often has greater leverage than employers offering their own coverage...

[Read Full Interview](#)



We're pleased to announce that Dr. Richard Besser, President and CEO of the [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#), will be a Keynote Speaker at our Spring Reception.

Join us for an inspiring evening, celebrating the role community leaders play in overall health, as Dr. Besser shares insights on the importance of supporting public health and improving health outcomes for everyone.



This event is for Quality Institute members and invited guests.

[Register Here](#)



The [Mayors Wellness Campaign](#) (MWC) is strengthening connections across New Jersey through its virtual community health hub on [Basecamp](#), engaging more than 125 members. The platform provides municipal leaders with a simple, organized way to share local programs, track priorities, and highlight results with the Quality Institute and peer communities.

Sponsors and partners can see, in real time, how their support advances measurable progress and sustains the day-to-day work that builds healthier communities statewide.



[Learn More](#)

Visit Us at AMCHP 2026 Conference



Find us at the [Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs \(AMCHP\)](#) 2026 Conference on Tuesday, March 10, at 10 a.m., for "Reimagining Partnerships: Harnessing the Power of Connection Through Perinatal Community Advisory Boards," where we'll be presenting with [The Children's Home Society of New Jersey](#).

NEW MEMBER



WELCOME

Vimo® is a national leader in state-based health insurance exchanges and Human Services programs. The organization partners with state agencies across the country to expand access to affordable health coverage and modernize the delivery of essential human services.



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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