



# NEW JERSEY HEALTH CARE **QUALITY INSTITUTE**

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



## **PRESIDENT & CEO, LINDA SCHWIMMER** **Quality Institute Membership Gathers to Advance Greater Integration of Behavioral Health and Primary Care**

At our Spring All Council Conference last week, we brought together leaders working to integrate mental health and primary care. Integrating care has always been a goal for the Quality Institute, and the need is even greater now with the post-pandemic demand for mental health services in addition to people catching up on unmet physical health and preventive care.

We know that integrated care offers the opportunity to assess a person's overall needs and to provide more effective care. At the conference, we outlined the current integrated licensing delays, work force shortage, the lack of diversity among clinicians, and payment barriers. At the same time, we recognized the current work moving forward to address these barriers.

It was good to hear from experts such as Roy Leitstein, CEO of Legacy Treatment Services, who pointed out that despite traditional stigma surrounding mental health and seeking out treatment, younger generations are more comfortable discussing their mental health challenges and are more informed about mental health needs. Asserting that stigma will be further addressed through integrated care, he shared that, "the answer to ending the stigma around mental health is for us to embed behavioral health in primary care offices and for us to talk about it and for docs to ask their patients how they are feeling."

John Jacobi, JD, Professor of Health Law at Seton Hall University, shared the legislative and regulatory history and status in New Jersey whereby larger

organizations, hospital systems, or federally qualified health centers have been able to obtain special approval, or multiple licenses to deliver integrated care, or offer integrated care but not bill for it. Today we are still waiting on regulations for an integrated license for others, a lag that makes it more difficult for integrated care to be a widespread practice in New Jersey.

Chris Barton, LCSW, Senior Director, Horizon BCBSNJ, and LeAnn DiBenedetto, LCSW, Program Director, Acenda, both explained the benefits of the payment changes coming to NJ Family Care whereby physical health and behavioral health will be paid for by the same payer. With LeAnn commenting that, “if a Medicaid managed care organization is paying for physical health and the State is paying for behavioral health, there’s challenges to bridging those pieces. We need to incentivize the creation of innovative payment systems and integrated models of care that unite physical health and behavioral health. ... just as our bodies are united in one physical system.”

As we continue to look for ways to support greater integration of care, please reach out to us with your related suggestions and concerns.



## TAKE FIVE INTERVIEW

### Interviews with members, influencers, and noteworthy people

Jeffrey Boscamp, M.D., is Dean of the Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine, a member of the Quality Institute’s Education Council, Institutes of Higher Learning.

**Interview Sneak Peek:** *Your medical school vision states that every person in New Jersey, and in the United States, regardless of race or socioeconomic status, will enjoy the highest levels of wellness in an economically and behaviorally sustainable fashion. How can a medical school drive that kind of systemic and ambitious change?*

Starting a new medical school isn't for the faint of heart. You must have a good reason. And for us the vision is to create a new and different next generation of physician — a monumental goal, but the only way that you can really change our health system. The discussion started with Bob Garrett (Hackensack Meridian Health CEO) saying, “How can we make a big impact on health care in the country?” It began with the realization from all of us that to change the health care system that spends this much money — and doesn't get the outcomes it should — you need to start earlier in the process with a new type of student and a new way of teaching.

[Read Full Interview](#)



MAYORS WELLNESS CAMPAIGN®



We are excited to announce we have received funding from [The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey](#) to continue our work on mental health. This funding will allow us to continue to offer **free Youth and Adult Mental Health First Aid training** to residents throughout New Jersey.

To date, **we have trained over 120 community members** including elected officials, law enforcement, public health officers, and other municipal staff.

[Learn More - MWC Mental Health Toolkit](#)

MATERNAL INFANT  
HEALTH HUB'S

*Midwifery  
Collaborative*



Join the [Maternal Infant Health Hub's](#) next Midwifery Collaborative on **Thursday, June 15 from 1-2 pm**. This virtual convening for midwives, midwifery students, and health care stakeholders will focus on promoting midwifery education and training as it relates to the midwifery certification types (CNM, CM, and CPM).

Register for this Midwifery Collaborative to be part of sustained dialogue around supporting new educational pathways, the midwifery workforce, and analyzing

policy challenges. Please submit any questions for our Q&A segment in advance to Armonie Pierre-Jacques at [apierrejacques@njhcqi.org](mailto:apierrejacques@njhcqi.org).

[Register Now](#)

## MATERNAL INFANT HEALTH HUB'S

### *Policy Spotlight*



This virtual convening is an invitation for regulators, policy makers, midwives, and health care advocates. Join the [Maternal Infant Health Hub's](#) Policy Spotlight on **June 26 from 1-2 pm**. This event will provide an overview on New Jersey's proposed Fiscal Year '24 budget as it relates to maternal infant health and midwifery funding, as well as Medicaid payment innovation including a review of the Medicaid 1115 waiver.

Please submit any questions for our Q&A segment in advance to Armonie Pierre-Jacques at [apierrejacques@njhcqi.org](mailto:apierrejacques@njhcqi.org).

[Register Now](#)

## NEW MEMBER



*Southern New Jersey*  
**PERINATAL  
COOPERATIVE**

The [Cooperative is the state-licensed Maternal and Child Health Consortium](#) in the seven-county region of South Jersey. Through collaborative efforts of hospitals, birth centers, health care providers, community organizations, and consumers, the Cooperative works to improve the health of pregnant and birthing individuals, infants, and families.



For information on how to join, please contact Virginia Tesser at [vtesser@njhcqi.org](mailto:vtesser@njhcqi.org).

To learn more about our current initiatives, please visit our website at [www.njhcqi.org](http://www.njhcqi.org).

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