

**Integrated Population Health Data (iPHD) Project
Governing Board (GB) Meeting Minutes
May 17, 2024**

1:00 PM-2:30 PM EST

iPHD Governing Board meeting convened in compliance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act and all participants attended the meeting virtually.

Board Members Present:

Rachel Hammond (Chair and Designee for the Commissioner of Health Data Privacy Officer, NJ Department of Health), Joel Cantor (Ex officio/ Non-voting, Director of Rutgers Center for State Health Policy), Francis Baker (Ex officio/Designee for the NJ Attorney General, Deputy Attorney General, NJ Office of the Attorney General), Greg Woods (Ex officio/Designee for the NJ Commissioner of Human Services, Chief Innovation Officer, Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services Department of Human Services), Kathleen Noonan (Appointed- Chief Executive Officer, Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers), and Michele Norin (Ex officio, Senior Vice President & Chief Information Officer- Rutgers University)

Attendees:

Margaret Koller (Rutgers Center for State Health Policy), Mark McNally (NJ Office of the Attorney General), Maria Baron (NJ Department of Health), Darrin Goldman (NJ Department of Health), Kara Unal (NJ Department of Health), Bretta Jacquemin (NJ Department of Health), Michael Toto (NJ Department of Health), Jose Nova (Rutgers Center for State Health Policy), Kate Scotto (Rutgers Center for State Health Policy), Jolene Chou (Rutgers Center for State Health Policy), Joshua Lue (Rutgers Center for State Health Policy), Oliver Lontok (Rutgers Center for State Health Policy), Joseph Brecht (Rutgers Center for State Health Policy), Jolene Chou (Rutgers Center for State Health Policy), and Manisha Agrawal (Rutgers Center for State Health Policy)

Call to Order/Opening Remarks

- R. Hammond called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm with a quorum present.
- R. Hammond acknowledged that the meeting was being held in compliance with the 1975 NJ Open Public Meetings Act and that there was a publication of the meeting time and location in the Newark Star-Ledger and three websites (NJ. Com, NJ Press Association, and the iPHD website). The iPHD Governing Board meeting was convened in compliance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act. Instructions for registration and login information were posted in the publications and the websites.

General Updates/Actions

Updates from the Chair

- R. Hammond informed the Board that Jeff Brown has been appointed as the new Deputy Commissioner for Health Systems. J. Brown previously worked for the Department of Health in the medicinal marijuana program, and later transitioned to the Cannabis Regulatory Commission as an executive director.
- R. Hammond introduced Michael Toto, the new Regulatory Officer for the Department, as a new team member. M. Toto previously worked as a research project coordinator for the Rutgers Institute for Health. She added that M. Toto will be working on the DUA modifications between NJDOH and Rutgers to add the additional Governing Board approved datasets for inclusion into the iPHD Project.

Meeting Minutes

- R. Hammond requested Board members review the March 22, 2024, Governing Board meeting minutes (approved by the Minutes Subcommittee on May 1, 2024).
- M. Norin made a motion to approve the March 2024 meeting minutes. G. Woods provided the second, and upon roll call, the minutes were approved unanimously.

iPHD 2024 Cycles

- M. Koller updated the Board that iPHD received eleven applications for 2024 Cycle 1. Each application was assigned to two external Research Advisory Committee (RAC) reviewers. After receiving the RAC reviews, the applications will be reviewed by a five-member Governing Board Subcommittee. The Subcommittee meeting will be convened in early July to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each application and to provide recommendations for data release to the Governing Board.

- M. Koller informed the Board that CSHP released the Cycle 2 RFA and the letter of intent (LOI) is due on June 5th. This will be a data-only cycle with no pilot funding or fee waiver opportunity. The new research priority on high-value healthcare was added to the Cycle 2 RFA. She said that the review process will be similar to other cycles.

iPHD Grantee Publications

- M. Koller informed the Board regarding the first peer-reviewed iPHD publication in Health Affairs from a 2022 Cycle grantee. J. Cantor provided the publication link and mentioned that the findings are very favorable for New Jersey. R. Hammond inquired about posting the publication on the iPHD website. J. Brecht confirmed that the publication is already available on the website. He added that as more publications are received, CSHP will explore options to feature them more prominently on the website. J. Cantor noted that if open access to the article is not available, the abstract will be posted.

Annual Ethics Compliance and Outside Employment Questionnaire

- O. Lontok stated that he would share the information on completed and pending training requirements with the Board members. M. Koller inquired whether this also applies to state employees. R. Hammond clarified that there are two types of training: employee ethics training and special state officers training. The Governing Board members fall under the special state officers category. She further explained that if one prefers not to undergo both trainings, they may submit a copy of their employee training, which is more comprehensive than the special state officers training. Additionally, executive branch employees can submit a copy of their completed outside activity questionnaire. For the Governing Board, these documents serve as a screening tool to aid in recusals. She suggested involving M. Toto to assist with coordinating the training.

Discussion

RWJF's Health Data for Action (HD4A) Program Application Review

- J. Cantor provided an overview of the HD4A program:
 - HD4A aims to reduce the barriers often faced in accessing rich data by serving as a conduit between data owners and interested researchers. Successful applicants will be given access to the selected dataset at no cost to the grantee.
 - HD4A Received 20 brief proposals requesting the iPHD data. CSHP staff reviewed the proposals for alignment with the iPHD research priorities and

for value to the state. Among the 20 submitted, five applications were invited to submit a full proposal.

- The RWJF and the AcademyHealth external reviewers reviewed the full proposals and provided recommendations for data release (in lieu of the iPHD Research Advisory Committee).
 - CSHP met with the RWJF and the HD4A program staff and based on the reviews two finalists were selected by the staff for Board's consideration.
 - RWJF will pay the data preparation fees (\$50K/project) to iPHD.
- J. Cantor said that the application materials were shared with the Board for review and discussion today. CSHP had received permission from the applicants to discuss their application in the open public meeting. The reviewer names were redacted to maintain confidentiality.
 - R. Hammond said that the Board had established criteria in December for funding decisions. She asked M. McNally if a different set of criteria was required to approve these applications. J. Cantor responded that RWJF is providing a fee-waiver to the applicants, and the funding will only be provided to new investigators. He added that one application meets the new investigator criteria. M. McNally noted that there is no need to set new criteria.
 - R. Hammond opened the discussion on both applications and stated that they align well with the iPHD research priorities, purpose, and established criteria. She requested that Board members share their comments or concerns about the applications. K. Noonan commented that the projects are good and that she is comfortable with the process. G. Woods agreed with K. Noonan's remarks. R. Hammond then asked the Board members to make a motion to approve data release for both applications. M. Norin made a motion to approve data release for the two HD4A applications. F. Baker seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved. Both projects were thus approved for data release. J. Cantor noted that this approval is bringing in very strong researchers to do valuable work for New Jersey.

Proposal Information		Motion	Second	Voting for Data Release		
Title	PI/Institution			Yes	No	Recused
Trends in Fatal and Nonfatal Opioid-Related Overdoses among Pregnant and Postpartum Women Living in NJ	Ellerie Weber, PhD, MBA Assistant Professor Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai	M. Norin	F. Baker	G. Woods R. Hammond K. Noonan F. Baker M. Norin	0	0
Impacts of Obstetric Unit Closures on Maternal and Infant Health in New Jersey	Jennifer Helen Kwok, PhD Assistant Professor The Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois					

Electronic Health Record (EHR) data linkage overview

- J. Cantor stated that CSHP is exploring the possibility of integrating EHR data into iPHD. He noted that the current datasets do not permit the measurement of clinical outcomes. Adding EHR data would enhance the datasets by enabling researchers to draw appropriate inferences from observed differences. This improvement would attract a wider range of applicants, particularly from New Jersey Medical Schools, which are specifically mentioned in the iPHD legislation as potential applicants. Additionally, this integration could support iPHD’s sustainability through grants from NIH and similar organizations.
- J. Cantor provided an overview of the Rutgers Health EHR data and the logistics of bringing the data to iPHD:
 - NJ’s largest health system, with over 1.8 million patients: includes 230+ practices, 325+ practice locations, 12+ acute care RWJ Barnabas Health hospitals
 - EHR data is already curated for research (would not require significant effort from iPHD data team)
 - Robust HIPAA guardrails and secure data environment
 - iPHD data are currently held in a separate enclave within the same Rutgers secure environment, and crossing data across those enclaves is logistically manageable.
 - Would be available to any approved iPHD data user (not just Rutgers researchers)
 - While the application approval process may be little complex, there will be no change in the Board’s process and the Board would retain complete control over access to the iPHD data
 - Rutgers Health would have their own review and approval process. So, each applicant must meet the standards on both sides. The

final approval of use of iPHD data for applications using both data systems would rest entirely with the board.

- Discussions started with Rutgers Health, and CSHP has received preliminary approval from the Chancellor's office to explore this option. The next steps involve going through the governance process at RWJ Barnabas and Rutgers Health. If approved, a formal proposal will be submitted to the Board for approval to add the EHR data.
- G. Woods asked if it would be more efficient to obtain data from NJHIN or regional HIEs rather than from individual health systems. R. Hammond inquired whether iPHD is using a master patient index (MPI) to facilitate accurate linkages. J. Cantor responded that NJHIN might provide more detailed information compared to individual health systems. G. Woods acknowledged the potential tradeoff between the breadth and depth of data. J. Cantor mentioned that acquiring NJHIN data could take years but expressed willingness to explore this approach further. M. Koller added that the next meeting with Rutgers Health is scheduled for June, and she will follow up with them.
- K. Noonan noted that the regional health hub data (RHH) could be a potential option. The RHH data is not statewide but available at a granular level. J. Cantor agreed that the RHH data is geographically complimentary.
- In response to the R. Hammond's question about MPI, J. Nova said the current datasets from DOH doesn't include MPI. He added that iPHD is ready to implement that in its process. R. Hammond responded that she would explore this further as most of the administrative datasets have gone through the process to attach the MPI number. J. Nova said that he will reach out to data stewards during the summer for additional years of data, making it a good time to implement any process change.
- M. Norin said that from a technical perspective, there would be extra layers of approvals and protections that need to be accounted for. The opportunity is there to expand the data for research, but the challenge lies in dealing with governance and oversight layers. J. Cantor agreed that it would be a complex process. K. Noonan said that it is a good positive step for iPHD.

R. Hammond indicated that the executive session was not needed. R. Hammond asked if anyone would like to make a public comment. There were no comments, and the open session of the Governing Board meeting was adjourned at 1:59 pm.

- G. Woods made a motion to adjourn the open session of the meeting.
- K. Noonan offered a second.
- Unanimous vote to adjourn the meeting.