

**Integrated Population Health Data (iPHD) Project
Governing Board (GB) Meeting Minutes
November 21, 2025**

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), Rashmi Jain (Appointed- Big Data/Security Expert, Chair of Information Management and Business Analytics, Montclair State University), Francis Baker (Ex officio/Designee for the NJ Attorney General, Deputy Attorney General, NJ Office of the Attorney General), Robert Bartolone (Ex officio/Designee for the New Jersey State Treasurer, Chief, Federal and State Compliance and Accountability, New Jersey Department of the Treasury, Office of Management and Budget), Elizabeth Litten (Appointed- Legal & Privacy Expert, Partner and Chief Privacy & HIPAA Compliance Officer, Fox Rothschild LLP), Kathleen Noonan (Appointed- Chief Executive Officer, Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers), Michele Norin (Ex officio, Senior Vice President & Chief Information Officer- Rutgers University), and Janet Currie (Appointed- Human Subjects Research Expert, Professor of Economics and Policy Affairs, Princeton University)

Attendees:

Margaret Koller (Rutgers Center for State Health Policy), Mark McNally (NJ Office of the Attorney General), Suzanne Borys (NJ Department of Human Services), Maria Baron (NJ Department of Health), Kara Unal (NJ Department of Health), Michael Toto (NJ Department of Health), Geeta Real (NJ Department of Health), Barbara Bolden (NJ Department of Health), Domenica Cevallos (NJ Department of Health), Geneveive Klanne-Raymond (NJ Department of Health), Yong Lee (NJ Department of Health), Jose Nova (Rutgers Center for State Health Policy), Sawsan Metry (Prospective Applicant),

Chris Krol (Rutgers University-Camden), 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), Joe Brecht (Rutgers Center for State Health Policy), Katherine Kovacs (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 1:32 pm with a quorum present.
- R. Hammond acknowledged that the meeting was held in compliance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act. Notices were published in the Newark Star Ledger and posted on relevant websites with registration and login instructions.
- R. Hammond reminded the attendees to remain on mute if you are not a Board member or the Rutgers staff member supporting the Board or the DAG. There will be an opportunity to share thoughts before voting for applications and in the end.
- R. Hammond formally welcomed B. Bartolone back to the Board.
- R. Hammond said that DOH amended the MOA to add an additional \$400K in funding for FY 2025. This additional funding will be used to support future fee waivers and staff time.

General Updates/Actions

Meeting Minutes

- R. Hammond requested Board members to review and approve the September 19, 2025, Governing Board meeting minutes. The minutes were approved by the Minutes Subcommittee on October 17, 2025.
- R. Jain made a motion to approve the September meeting minutes. J. Currie seconded the motion, R. Bartolone abstained, and, upon roll call, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Pew Charitable Trust

- M. Koller about a request from the Pew Charitable Trusts Population Health Innovation Lab. They are interested in initiatives focused on data that enhance cross-sector data sharing. They reached out to schedule interviews to create an issue brief on iPHD. This brief aims to identify the facilitators and barriers that could inform the field of integrated data systems.
- M. Koller noted that this presents a valuable opportunity to promote iPHD on a national level.

Cycle 7 LOIs

- M. Koller informed the Board that iPHD received seven LOIs for Cycle 7. While LOIs are mandatory but non-binding. Among the submissions, four LOIs were submitted from Rutgers, one from the Central Jersey Family Health Consortium, and two from institutions outside New Jersey. Notably, four out of seven applicants are planning non-iPHD data linkages.

Discussion

Addressing Third-Party Linkage Compliance

- M. Koller reminded the Board that the initial draft was presented during the September meeting, which prompted extensive discussions.
- M. Koller said that the CSHP utilized the feedback to assess the number of previously approved applications that incorporated third-party (non-iPHD) data linkages. Approximately fifty percent of the projects involving data release included non-iPHD linkages. The types of linkages varied, encompassing geographic area-level, person-level, and other categories.
- M. Koller stated that CSHP met with several experts from the Board—E. Litten, R. Hammond, and M. McNally—to address the issues raised in the last meeting. To mitigate potential risks to the greatest extent possible, CSHP is focusing on: (a) developing a robust third-party data linkage policy and (b) strengthening the DUA language to ensure that researchers are held accountable for their actions and the use of data.
- M. Koller said that J. Nova has diagrammed and categorized the types of linkage requests observed in the applications so far. J. Nova provided an overview of these categories in the diagram and noted that researchers often add additional datasets to enhance the iPHD data. He mentioned that area-level linkages are the most common and carry a relatively lower risk of re-identification compared to person-level linkages. In scenarios involving person-level linkage without participant consent, researchers are required to conduct the analysis within the secure enclave at Rutgers.
- M. Koller presented the third-party linkage policy, emphasizing its purpose to ensure privacy, security, and compliance with all relevant laws, regulations, and iPHD data use policies. This linkage must be essential for answering the research question and applies to all external linkage requests. Furthermore, all external linkages should be included in the IRB application, and the applicant must provide a letter of support from the organization sharing the data.

- M. Koller outlined key enhancements to the DUA and said that the new language has added stronger safeguards and compliance requirements.
- E. Litten inquired about the process for handling linkage requests subsequent to a project's approval. R. Hammond clarified that such requests would require Board's approval. M. Norin applauded the effort and stated that any modifications made after approval must be presented to the Board along with a rationale to ensure that the proposed additions are essential for the research.
- R. Hammond then invited public comments prior to the Board's vote on the third-party (non-iPHD) data linkage policy. No public comments were offered.
- E. Litten made a motion to approve the third-party (non-iPHD) data linkage policy. K. Noonan provided the second and, upon roll call, the motion was unanimously approved.
- M. Koller said that CSHP had integrated expert feedback to enhance the language of the DUA and requested that M. McNally review the revisions and provide any additional suggestions to further strengthen the language.

Review of Applications: Cycle 6

- Recusals by J. Cantor, E. Litten, M. Norin.
- R. Hammond provided a quick overview of the process. She outlined the criteria for data release. These include: it's grounded in good science, well written, presents a feasible analytics plan, and the strengths and weaknesses of the application.
- J. Currie presented the subcommittee's recommendations for Cycle 6 applications:
 1. Overall, the subcommittee unanimously recommended data release for eight out of twelve applications. These proposals align well with iPHD's mission to enhance population health and equity, grounded in good science, well written and presented a feasible analytic plan. Of the eight applications, five proposed linking to a non-iPHD dataset. Among these, two applications requested person-level linkage.
 2. J. Currie provided an overview of applications 601 and 606-612 that are recommended for data release. Regarding application 609, she noted that it addresses a timely topic, has a clear analytic strategy, and is supported by a strong team. However, the application did not clearly explain the necessity for person-level identifiers.
 - a. R. Hammond expressed concern regarding the person-level linkage request for application 609, if that is not necessary. R. Jain agreed, stating that while the topic is significant, the rationale for the person-level linkage remains unclear.

- b. J. Currie inquired whether we could grant conditional approval pending clarification from the PI or require them to reapply in the next cycle. R. Hammond responded that conditional approval is not an option. However, one possible approach is to seek clarification from the PI and discuss the application at the December meeting.
 - c. J. Nova responded that CSHP has received similar questions in the past and met with the prospective applicant to get more information. Both J. Currie and R. Jain agreed that further clarification should be requested.
3. Four projects (602-605) had significant methodological weaknesses, and there was a clear consensus that these projects did not meet the criteria for data release.
4. Prior to voting on the applications, R. Hammond called for public comment. It was noted that there were no comments provided.

Proposal information		Motion	Second	Voting to Data Release		
Title	PI/Institution			Yes	No	Recused
Approved for Data Release						
Temporal Patterns of Suicidal Behavior among Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth and Homeless Youth (#601)	Rie Sakai-Bizmark, MD, MPH, PhD UCLA Medical School	R. Jain	K. Noonan	R. Hammond F. Baker R. Bartolone K. Noonan R. Jain J. Currie	0	E. Litten M. Norin
Socio-economic Influences on Maternal and Child Health in New Jersey (#606)	James F. Oehmke, PhD Co-PI: Yanhong Jin, PhD Rutgers School of Env. and Biological Sciences					
Neighborhood Environmental Stressors and Maternal and Perinatal Outcomes in New Jersey (#607)	Stephanie Shiau, PhD, MPH Co-PI: Stefania Papatheodorou, MD, PhD Rutgers School of Public Health					
Enhancing EMS Triage and Transport Decisions Using AI to Improve Patient Outcomes and Resource Allocation (#608)	Erik C. Brewer, PhD Henry M. Rowan College of Engineering Co-PI: Alfred Sacchetti, MD Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital					
Novel Indicators and Analysis of New Jersey COVID-19 Data (#610)	James F. Oehmke, PhD Rutgers School of Env. and Biological Sciences					
The Impact of Homelessness and Housing Services on Maternal and Infant Health (#611)	Dan Treglia, PhD Rutgers Center for State Health Policy Co-PI: Mark McGovern, PhD Rutgers School of Public Health					

Maternal Substance Use and Psychiatric Disorders and Prenatal Substance Use Following the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency and Cannabis Legalization in New Jersey (#612)	Jessica E. Salvatore, PhD Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, Department of Psychiatry				
Need Additional Information: Pending Discussion					
Understanding the Impact of Hospital Ransomware Attacks on Health Outcomes in New Jersey (#609)	Rahi Abouk, PhD William Paterson University	K. Noonan	R. Jain	R. Hammond F. Baker R. Bartolone K. Noonan R. Jain J. Currie	0
Development of a Comprehensive Risk-Adjusted Pregnancy Outcome Interactive Report Card (#602)	Patrick Bernet, PhD Seton Hall University	F. Baker	R. Jain	0	R. Hammond F. Baker R. Bartolone K. Noonan R. Jain J. Currie
Efficiency in Healthcare (#603)	Tetsuji Yamada, PhD Co-PI: Chris Krol, MBA Rutgers University – Camden				
Disparities of Healthcare Services Accessibility, Health Outcomes, and Cost of Healthcare among Marginalized Population in New Jersey: Experimental Study before, during and after Covid-19 Pandemic (#604)	Tetsuji Yamada, PhD Rutgers University – Camden				
Crime, Care, and Consolidation: How Opioid Treatment Programs Amid Hospital CHOWs (Change of Ownership) Relate to Local Crime (#605)	Yachun Wen, MS (PhD student) Rutgers University – Camden				

Selection of Fee-Waivers

- R. Hammond provided an overview of the criteria for selecting applications for fee waivers. The criteria include the following: whether the applicant has previously received funding, if they are addressing a public health priority area, whether they represent a New Jersey state entity, any weaknesses in the proposal, diversity of applicant, if the organization or geography is underrepresented, if the research priorities or projects are underrepresented, and whether there are any other available funding sources.
- R. Hammond said that two fee-waivers are available for this cycle, and out of the seven approved applications for data release, four are requesting fee waivers. However, these applications also indicated that they have alternative funding sources available to cover the data fees. As a result, she recommended not

approving fee waivers for any of these projects since they have alternate sources of funding available.

- K. Noonan agreed and said that we should ensure that they have alternate funding sources to cover the costs.
- Prior to voting on the fee-waivers, R. Hammond called for public comment. It was noted that there were no comments provided.
- R. Jain made a motion to not approve fee-waivers for any application approved for data release. J. Currie provided the second and, upon roll call, the motion was unanimously approved.

R. Hammond indicated that the executive session is not needed. R. Hammond asked if anyone would like to make a public comment. She added that each commentor has a maximum of three minutes to share their comments.

- C. Krol inquired about the availability of primary care data for his research. J. Cantor responded that the Board has not approved bringing in any data that would give primary care Information with the exception of the Medicaid claims which is under legal review.

There were no other comments, and the open session of the Governing Board meeting was adjourned at 2: 49 pm.

- E. Litten made a motion to adjourn the open session of the meeting.
- R. Jain offered a second.
- Unanimous vote to adjourn the meeting.