

**Integrated Population Health Data (iPHD) Project
Governing Board (GB) Meeting Minutes
March 27, 2026**

1:30 PM-3:00 PM EST

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

Board Members Present:

Francis Baker (Acting Chair and Ex officio/Designee for the NJ Attorney General, Deputy Attorney General, NJ Office of the Attorney General), 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), Elizabeth Litten (Appointed- Legal & Privacy Expert, Partner and Chief Privacy & HIPAA Compliance Officer, Fox Rothschild LLP), Greg Woods (Ex officio/Designee for the NJ Commissioner of Human Services, Assistant Commissioner and Division Director, Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services Department of Human Services), 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)

Special guest:

Commissioner Dr. Raynard Washington (NJ Department of Health)

Attendees:

Margaret Koller (Rutgers Center for State Health Policy), Mark McNally (NJ Office of the Attorney General), Mehnaz Mustafa (NJ Department of Health), Maria Baron (NJ Department of Health), Kara Unal (NJ Department of Health), Michael Toto (NJ Department of Health), Geeta Real (NJ Department of Health), Darrin Goldman (NJ Department of Health), Domenica Cevallos (NJ Department of Health), Stella Tsai (NJ

Department of Health), Asas Islan (NJ Department of Health), Yong Lee (NJ Department of Health), Michael Stoto (Professor Emeritus, Georgetown University), Jose Nova (Rutgers Center for State Health Policy), Sawsan Metry (Prospective Applicant), 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), Katherine Kovacs (Rutgers Center for State Health Policy), Julien Rodriguez (Rutgers Center for State Health Policy), and Manisha Agrawal (Rutgers Center for State Health Policy)

Call to Order/Opening Remarks

- F. Baker called the meeting to order at 1:32 pm with a quorum present.
- F. Baker 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.

General Updates/Actions

Meeting Minutes

- F. Baker requested Board members to review and approve the February 27, 2026, Governing Board meeting minutes.
- J. Currie made a motion to approve the February meeting minutes. R. Jain seconded the motion, and, upon roll call, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Welcome and Introductions to Dr. Washington

- F. Baker presented a formal introduction of Commissioner Washington to the Board.
- Commissioner Washington recognized New Jersey for its substantial progress in the advancement of public health data. He noted that the iPHD initiative serves as a prime example of how the state is proactively utilizing data to establish priorities and assess the impact of its initiatives. He made the following remarks regarding the value of iPHD for New Jersey:
 - R. Hammond provided him with an overview before the meeting. He emphasized that the planning and implementation of the iPHD have been carefully designed, establishing it as a credible and reliable resource for researchers.
 - Addition of new datasets from the Department of Children and Families, Corrections and other data from Human Services including Medicaid will

provide opportunities to further leverage this resource in a significant way.

- The iPHD research priorities established by iPHD are closely aligned with the objectives of the State. The integrated data provided by iPHD offers a comprehensive overview of the state's population. This valuable resource has the potential to produce evidence that can effectively transform research efforts into actionable strategies.
- Commissioner Washington outlined Governor's priorities for the next four years and emphasized the potential role of iPHD data assets in aligning these priorities with the broader mission.
 - **Increase affordability for state's residents:** The Office of Healthcare Affordability and Transparency, which is part of the Department of Health, is focused on assessing the reasons behind the rising healthcare costs. The goal is to identify policy measures and other tools that can help control the growth of these costs, ultimately leading to lower expenses for residents. Additionally, the integration of Medicaid data with other iPHD data will be valuable in supporting these initiatives. He added that it will require collaboration across multiple agencies and sectors to find ways to contain costs while addressing the needs of residents in the current budgetary conditions.
 - **Addressing children's mental health issues:** One of Governor Sherrill's first executive orders was to establish the Office of Youth Mental Health Safety and Awareness. This initiative also includes the creation of a new university-based social media research center intended to analyze the factors contributing to the youth mental health crisis, as well as its implications and potential solutions.
 - **Improve governmental accountability and transparency:** The investments will be monitored to ensure they are generating meaningful value for the state.
- Commissioner Washington highlighted the significant fiscal challenges currently facing the state and emphasized the importance of iPHD exploring all potential revenue channels. This approach will be essential for sustaining vital work and preparing for future funding constraints.
- F. Baker thanked the Commissioner for the insights shared and then invited the Board members to introduce themselves and ask any questions they might have:
 - J. Currie noted that details on policies affecting affordability is challenging to find for conducting research. The Commissioner replied that the accessibility of this information depends on whether it is classified as a

policy or a rule, as well as the specific resources available. However, there is significant potential to support researchers, especially with the expansion of iPHD, by identifying and prioritizing high-impact research areas.

- K. Noonan inquired if there is a possibility of increasing funding for iPHD, noting that funding has remained flat for many years despite increasing data demands from DOH. Commissioner Washington responded that the state is currently facing structural deficits due to reduced federal funding from HR1. He suggested exploring other revenue streams to sustain important work.
 - G. Woods mentioned that discussions about moving Medicaid data to iPHD are ongoing with DHS attorneys. Commissioner Washington responded that this will be important, stating that one should not set targets at the highest level, but rather start from the bottom and set goals for incremental change over time.
 - R. Jain expressed her support for K. Noonan's request for additional iPHD funding and appreciated the Commissioner's focus on the multiple facets of healthcare—such as social, financial, and access issues—that need to be addressed alongside care.
 - E. Litten said that the Commissioner's insights would greatly aid in advancing iPHD to the next phase.
 - M. Norin said that the university manages sensitive data similar to Medicaid, and the same environment is used to support the iPHD datasets from DOH.
- F. Baker expressed his gratitude to the Commissioner for the opportunity for the Board to meet with him and engage in a question-and-answer session.

Review of Applications: Cycle 7

- Recusals by J. Cantor, E. Litten, M. Norin.
- F. Baker provided a brief overview of the process. He outlined the criteria for releasing data, which include: alignment with one or more of the research priorities, it's grounded in good science, well written, presents a feasible analytics plan, and an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the application.
- F. Baker said that out of the four applications, M. Stoto will present applications 701 and 702, while M. Koller will present the other two applications.
- M. Stoto and M. Koller presented the Research Review Committee's (RRC) recommendations for the Cycle 7 applications:

1. M. Stoto said that the RRC unanimously recommended data release for two out of four applications. These proposals align closely with iPHD's mission to enhance population health and equity, are grounded in good science, well written and present a feasible analytic plan.
 - a. For application #702, G. Woods inquired whether the reviewers were aware that the continuous eligibility for adults is a provision in New Jersey's 1115 demonstration that has never been implemented. M. Koller responded that the reviewers were aware of the limitations of the application.
2. Regarding application #703 and #704, M. Koller noted that the RRC recommended further discussions for both applications.
 - a. Project #703 addresses a timely and important topic and is supported by a strong team but had several methodological and conceptual weaknesses. Reviewers noted that there were no privacy or security concerns for releasing data and recommended that the applicant address the feedback and resubmit it in the next cycle.
 - i. J. Currie said that the concept is flawed, as it does not consider that individuals with complex problems may seek better facilities and bypass the nearest hospital.
 - ii. K. Noonan said that the research needs to be nuanced and should contribute to solving access issues which is not clearly outlined in this application.
 - iii. G. Woods and J. Currie inquired about the cost in staff time for processing one of these data requests and how that compares to the data fees collected by iPHD.
 - iv. M. Koller responded that the financial updates, including per-application processing costs, will be shared in the May meeting. She noted that demand is increasing, and the complexity of applications involving third-party and other sophisticated linkages require significantly more time.
 - b. Project #704 is a multi-state application approved by NIH. However, the application lacks detailed explanations and does not clearly articulate the implications and benefits of using the iPHD data for New Jersey. As a result, the study's relevance to the New Jersey context is limited. This proposal was submitted during the regular cycle because it was submitted before the expedited review policy approved by the Board.
3. F. Baker said the applications 701 and 702 were recommended for data release by the RRC and 703 and 704 were flagged for further discussion.

- a. Application #703: K. Noonan, G. Woods, R. Jain suggested providing feedback to the applicant to address limitations and prepare for resubmission in the next cycle.
- b. Application #704: G. Woods, K. Noonan, R. Jain recommended the release of data, as it has gone through an NIH review process.

4. Prior to voting on the applications, F. Baker 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						
Hospital Market Consolidation and Access to Quality Healthcare in New Jersey (#701)	PI: Derek DeLia, PhD Co-I: Joel Cantor, ScD Rutgers University-Bloustein School of Planning & Public Policy	J. Currie	G. Woods	F. Baker G. Woods K. Noonan R. Jain J. Currie	0	E. Litten M. Norin
Evaluation of the Association of Medicaid Continuous Eligibility on Hospital Charity Care (#702)	PI: Irina Grafova, PhD Co-I: Joel Cantor, ScD Rutgers University-Bloustein School of Planning & Public Policy					
PROMISE/OVAL (#704)	Hannah Cooper, ScD Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University					
More than Miles: Understanding Realized Access to Healthcare in New Jersey (#703)	Michael Smart, PhD Rutgers University-Bloustein School of Planning & Public Policy	J. Currie	R. Jain	0	F. Baker G. Woods K. Noonan R. Jain J. Currie	

Evolving complexities of iPHD applications and third-party linkages

- J. Nova provided a quick overview of two scenarios that require complex data linkages and multiple approvals. The first involves an application approved in Cycle 6, which includes a linkage with Medicaid and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). This will not require the sharing of any Personally Identifiable Information (PII) for creating a crosswalk file. The second application, which will be discussed in the April meeting, involves linking of iPHD data to Medicaid data at the federal level. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) operates a Virtual Research Data Center (VRDC), which restricts the release of data. To facilitate this linkage, the iPHD team will provide the VRDC team with a

finder file containing personally identifiable information (PII). This represents a new scenario for iPHD.

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

There were no public comments, and the open session of the Governing Board meeting was adjourned at 3: 10 pm.

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