

## NEW DATA ACCESS POLICIES & EXPEDITED REVIEW PROCESS



The iPHD Governing Board has adopted three new policies to provide clarity and additional guidelines for data access and linkage and to streamline application review. These policies are available on the [iPHD website](#) and are described below.

### Data Linkage to Non-iPHD Data Sets:

iPHD data may be linked to external (i.e., non-iPHD) data sets only when the linkage is disclosed in the application, approved by the iPHD Governing Board, and authorized through a Data Use Agreement (DUA).

### Requests for Additional Data Years:

The iPHD may provide access to additional data years that became available after an approved application was submitted, so long as such requests are received prior to initiation of the Data Use Agreement (DUA) and Institutional Review Board (IRB) review process.

### Expedited Review for Peer Reviewed Proposals:

The iPHD will allow for the expedited consideration by the Governing Board of applications previously approved through a scientific, peer-reviewed process that includes, but is not limited to, federally funded mechanisms or other equivalent external peer review processes.

## GOVERNING BOARD APPROVES LATEST RESEARCH PROJECTS

The iPHD Governing Board approved eleven new projects for data access from its 2025 cycles. Click on each to learn more.

### Cycle 7

- [Hospital Market Consolidation and Access to Quality Healthcare in New Jersey](#)
- [Evaluation of the Association of Medicaid Continuous Eligibility on Hospital Charity Care](#)
- [PRegnancy and the mOrbidity Mortality rIsk Environment \(PROMISE\) and Overdoses Among Pregnant/Postpartum Women and Laws Governing Drug Use in Pregnancy: A Mixed-Methods Project \(OVAL\)](#)

### Cycle 6

- [The Impact of Homelessness and Housing Services on Maternal and Infant Health](#)
- [Improving EMS Transport Decisions with Artificial Intelligence to Enhance Patient Outcomes](#)
- [Temporal Patterns of Suicidal Behavior among Deaf or Hard of Hearing Youth and Homeless Youth](#)
- [Novel Indicators and Analysis of New Jersey COVID-19 Data](#)
- [Area-Level Environmental Stressors and Maternal and Infant Health in New Jersey](#)
- [Prevalence of Substance Use During Pregnancy in New Jersey: Investigating the Effects of COVID-19 and Cannabis Legislation](#)
- [Socioeconomic Influences on Maternal and Child Health in New Jersey](#)
- [Understanding the Impact of Hospital Ransomware Attacks on Health Outcomes in New Jersey](#)

## iPHD DATA INFORMS ANALYSIS OF POSTPARTUM EMERGENCY CARE

**Slawa Rokicki, PhD, MS**, assistant professor at the Rutgers School of Public Health, used linked birth and hospital discharge data from the iPHD Project to examine the demographic, social, and health determinants of postpartum emergency department use, with a focus on the impact of depression symptoms at delivery.



Her findings, published in *Health Affairs*, demonstrate that when compared with infants who had mothers with no symptoms, infants with mothers with mild or moderate to severe depressive symptoms had significantly higher overall and nonemergent emergency department use. Learn more about this project and read the full article on the [iPHD website](#).

## NEW STUDY USING iPHD DATA EXPLORES MATERNAL MORBIDITY



**Cheryl Smith, PhD**, the director of evaluation and analytics for the Central Jersey Family Health Consortium, co-authored a new journal article published in the *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*. She and colleagues used NJ Birth, Mortality, Hospital Discharge, and CDRSS COVID-19 Test data to examine Black/White

differences in the incidence of maternal morbidity during the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis found that Black/African American racial identification was directly associated with both the occurrence of maternal morbidity and greater severe maternal morbidity burden. You can learn more about this project on the [iPHD website](#).

## RESEARCH & DATA ROUNDUP

### FEATURED PROJECT: SOCIAL VULNERABILITY, DISPARITIES, AND THE HEALTH IMPACTS OF THE INTERSECTING COVID-19 AND OPIOID EPIDEMICS ON NEW JERSEY COMMUNITIES



**Stephen Crystal, PhD, MA**, director of the Center for Health Services Research at the Rutgers Institute for Health, is linking NJ Mortality, Hospital Discharge, and CDRSS COVID-19 Test data to explore patterns in outcomes for the COVID-19 and opioid

addiction epidemics, as well as the role of geographic, community, demographic, and other factors influencing the observed trends.

Dr. Crystal and his research team shared preliminary findings at the fall 2025 iPHD [Research and Planning Meeting](#), and you can learn more about this project on the [iPHD website](#).

### iPHD DATA DIGEST: UPDATE ON AVAILABLE DATA & NEW DATA RESOURCES

Records from 2023 are now available for all five data sets, and 2024 records have been added to the NJ Hospital Discharge Data Collection System and EMS data sets. Visit the [iPHD website](#) to view the latest data holdings and documentation, including updated variable lists and data dictionaries.

The iPHD data team is also processing **Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS)** data from the NJ Department of Health, as well as **Child Protection & Permanency (CP&P)** and **Children's Systems of Care (CSOC) Cyber** data from the NJ Department of Children and Families. These data sets will be available for Application Cycle 9 in 2026.



## GET TO KNOW THE GOV BOARD: WELCOME MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Colleague,



Welcome and thank you for taking the time to read the first edition of the iPHD Project newsletter. The Governing Board is proud of the impactful work being done to advance timely, rigorous, and ethical population health research in the decade since the iPHD was enacted through [legislation](#).

Our Governing Board is charged with overseeing all components of the iPHD process including the review and approval of researcher requests for data. We are excited about the year ahead and look forward to continuing to make additional data available to inform important population health research.

On behalf of the Governing Board, I want to acknowledge the Rutgers Center for State Health Policy for their steadfast leadership of the iPHD Project, and to thank our entire community—researchers, stakeholders, and participants alike—for your continued dedication to this vital work.

Warmly,

**Rachel Hammond, Esq., CIPP/G/US, CIPM, CIPT, CPM**  
*iPHD Governing Board Chair*

## PEW HIGHLIGHTS STATE-ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIP AT HEART OF iPHD

iPHD Governing Board Chair Rachel Hammond, Esq., CIPP/G/US, CIPM, CIPT, CPM and CSHP Executive Director Margaret Koller, MS sat down with [The Pew Charitable Trusts](#) to share insights about the development of the iPHD and highlight the special partnership between NJDOH and CSHP that makes it possible.

As Chairperson Hammond explains, “ultimately, [iPHD] data can and should lead to better policymaking... We’re hoping to use insights from this research to enhance our public health interventions and improve health equity.” [Read more here.](#)

## GET TO KNOW THE TEAM: JOSE NOVA, DIRECTOR OF DATA

Jose Nova, MS is the associate director of data & analytics at CSHP and leader of the Center’s data team. Since joining CSHP in 2004, Mr. Nova has led the development and expansion of the now seven member data team. He has been the architect behind the design and implementation of the iPHD’s successful data linkage strategy, which has now supported [37 projects](#).



In October 2025, he received the Rutgers Health [Chancellor’s Award](#) in recognition of his work and his sustained commitment to the university’s research mission. Learn more about Mr. Nova on the [iPHD website](#).

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## MILBANK HIGHLIGHTS THE NJ iPHD PROJECT



CSHP’s Executive Director Margaret Koller, MS and Communications Manager Joe Brecht, MCM detail the roadmap used to create the iPHD. The blog published by the [Milbank Memorial Fund](#) reflects on the experiences of building the iPHD and identifies lessons learned and best practices for successful implementation.

“While barriers to collaboration exist,” they write, “so too do opportunities to establish new relationships and expand the network of researchers that can ultimately maximize the impact of iPHD data and improve population health.” [Read more here.](#)