

ON BOARD

June 10, 2026



News and Views from the New Jersey Local Boards of Health Association

Next Meeting:

Saturday, Saturday, July 11, 2026

NJLBHA Board Meeting

10:00 AM EST

Zoom Meeting Link: [Join our Cloud HD Video Meeting](#)

Current Articles and Requests for Participation

*As President of NJLBHA I have been selected to be a founding member of the board of reviewers for our new NJ journal of public health. Please read the criteria for submissions on the attachment. Respectfully,
Paul David Roman*

Dear Colleagues,

I am reaching out to share a call for papers for the *New Jersey Journal of Public Health (NJJPH)* and to ask if you would be willing to circulate it among your members. *NJJPH* is a new, peer-reviewed, open-access journal created to highlight public health work across New Jersey, including the kinds of applied, practice-based efforts that are often not captured in traditional academic publications.

We are especially interested in submissions from public health practitioners, including:

- Program descriptions and evaluations
- Case studies from local or county health departments
- Practice-based innovations or lessons learned
- Policy and implementation insights

Many impactful public health initiatives are never formally documented or shared beyond their immediate context. *NJJPH* aims to provide a practical and supportive venue for bringing this work to a broader audience.

If you are willing, I would greatly appreciate you sharing the attached call for papers with your membership or relevant listservs.

Thank you for your continued leadership in advancing public health practice in New Jersey. Please feel free to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

Katie Pincura

Editor-in-Chief

New Jersey Journal of Public Health

<https://njjph.org/>

[CFP_NJLPH.pdf](#)



Combined Deaths from Alcohol, Drugs and Suicide Declined by 16% in 2024, New Report Finds

Pain in the Nation 2026 Highlights How Progress is at Risk Amid Federal Workforce and Funding Cuts; Special Feature on Suicide Sheds Light on Disparities



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The death rate from alcohol-induced, drug overdoses, and suicide causes decreased significantly in the United States in 2024 for the first time since 1999 (when datasets were initially published), with combined deaths dropping by 16 percent. Furthermore, provisional data for 2025 suggest a positive trend.

A new Trust for America's Health (TFAH) report released today, *Pain in the Nation 2026: The Epidemics of Alcohol, Drug, and Suicide Deaths*, explores the strategies and investments underpinning these recent declines—such as targeted prevention grants and programs, funding vital data systems, and a growing focus on early intervention. However, the report also highlights how severe federal workforce and funding cuts are putting this progress at risk.

While the new data represents historic improvement, the public health community is deeply concerned that recent cuts and program eliminations—impacting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (CDC's Injury Center), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Veterans Affairs health-care staff, and the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline's

[Read the Report](#)

Key Findings

- The combined age-adjusted rate of deaths from alcohol, drugs, and suicide declined by 16 percent in 2024, building on a 4 percent decrease in 2023. Specifically, alcohol-induced mortality by 4 percent, drug overdose mortality fell by 26 percent, and suicide mortality by 3 percent.
- Most of the nation saw geographic improvements in 2024, with 45 states and the District of Columbia experiencing lower combined mortality rates compared to the previous year. Four states had higher rates (Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming), and one state stayed the same (Nebraska) in 2024.
- A special feature on suicide reveals stark disparities despite overall progress. Suicide remains the second leading cause of death for ages 10-35. American Indian and Alaska Native people consistently experience the highest rates. Additionally, rates among Black youth have increased an alarming 144 percent between 2007 and 2020, and rural areas continue to face a suicide rate 41 percent higher than urban areas. Furthermore, while the exact rate of suicide deaths remains unknown for LGBTQ+ populations, research consistently finds higher rates of mental health issues, substance use, and suicidal behaviors for LGBTQ+ individuals compared to heterosexual individuals.

Recommendations for Policy Action

The *Pain in the Nation* report calls for a sustained commitment to primary prevention programs and investments, and includes recommendations on actions the Administration, Congress, and federal agencies should take, including:

- **Invest in prevention and conditions that promote health:** Provide robust funding and maintain the vital workforce for the CDC's Injury Center, spend behavioral health funds as directed by Congress, and support policies that reduce adverse childhood experiences and the impact of trauma.
- **Reduce overdose risk and access to lethal means of suicide:** Support policies to reduce overdoses and bloodborne infections, and promote efforts to limit access to lethal means, such as the safe storage of medications and firearms.
- **Transform the mental health and substance use prevention system:** Maintain SAMHSA's funding and crisis intervention programs like the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, restore Medicaid funding and eligibility to prevent coverage losses, and promote equity through specialized mental health workforce and targeted

services to reduce disparities in access and outcomes.

TFAH's media contact: Andrea Takash atakash@tfah.org





STATE OF NEW JERSEY
GOVERNOR MIKIE SHERRILL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 29, 2026

Contact: Maggie Garbarino

Press Office: Governor's Office

Email: Maggie.Garbarino@nj.gov

Governor Sherrill Appoints Lisa Montalbano as Ombudsman for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

TRENTON – Governor Mikie Sherrill today announced the appointment of Lisa Montalbano to serve as Ombudsman for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and their Families. Montalbano will lead the Office of the IDDO dedicated to helping individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families navigate New Jersey's systems of care and access State resources that facilitate independence and dignity.

"I am thrilled to appoint Lisa Montalbano to serve as Ombudsman for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Lisa brings more than two decades of experience connecting individuals with disabilities and their families with opportunities. I am confident that under her leadership, this Office will serve as an invaluable resource in ensuring New Jersey residents can connect with the State's diverse array of supports and services," **said Governor Sherrill.**

"I am honored to be appointed to serve as New Jersey's Ombudsman for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities," **said Lisa Montalbano.** "I look forward to partnering with the Governor to ensure New Jerseyans with intellectual and developmental disabilities can access the tools and resources to thrive."

Pursuant to [P.L. 2017, c. 269](#), the Ombudsperson's roles include serving as a source of information for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities and their families; supporting navigation of the process for obtaining services and supports from the Department of Human Services and the Department of Children and Families; educating and acting neutrally and objectively to support dispute resolutions; and identifying patterns of complaints and relevant improvement strategies.

Montalbano served as the Chief Executive Officer of Employment Horizons, a non-profit focused on employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. During this time, she cultivated relationships across the IDD community, including especially with families throughout the state.

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NJ Health Commission Urges Smoking Ban at Atlantic City Casinos

[Read more](#)



May 20, 2026

Local Public Health Infrastructure Grant Program



The **New Jersey Department of Health** (DOH), through its Division of Local Public Health, has announced the availability of funding under **the Local Public Health Infrastructure Grant Program 2027**. The program supports strengthening public health infrastructure across three Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Public Health Infrastructure Grant (PHIG) strategies: Workforce, Foundational Capabilities, and Data Modernization. The grant program is intended to help local health departments build, promote, and protect public health systems and services throughout the state. Approximately \$10.3 million in funding is available for the award period of July 1, 2026, through November 30, 2027.

Eligible applicants include local health departments listed in the May 8, 2026, **Redbook Directory of Local Health Departments in New Jersey**. Both LINCS Agency Local Health Departments and non-LINCS Local Health Departments are eligible to apply. Applicants must submit a Letter of Intent to the Division of Local Public Health by 3:00 p.m. on May 26, 2026. Applications will be available on **SAGE** beginning June 1, 2026, and completed applications are due by June 22, 2026. Additional grant requirements and application procedures are available through DOH. To learn more about the Local Public Health Infrastructure Grant Program, visit the **New Jersey Department of Health grants page** or contact Paula Van Clef, Research Scientist I, at **Paula.VanClef@doh.nj.gov** or 609-376-8699.

Contact: Ciara Bradley, Research Associate, **cbradley@njlm.org**, 609-695-3481, x128.

[View it on website](#)



Members: although we do not have a local linkage to the dept of human services, I believe that we need to be aware of what they do. the same goes for the state dept of families and children. our good friend Rick HAGER reached out to me recently and will be soon reinstituting contact with their related services. you all should go to the state websites of both depts to become more familiar with what they do. pdr



June/July

NJLBHA LinkedIn Account Reactivated



The New Jersey Local Boards of Health Association is excited to announce the re-activation of their official LinkedIn account! This platform will now serve as a hub for updates, resources, and collaboration opportunities to strengthen public health across the State. Follow along to stay connected with local initiatives, upcoming events, and important health news.

[NJLBHA LinkedIn Page](#)



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