

PUBLIC HEALTH COUNCIL

TOWN HALL MEETING

April 13, 2026

11:00 a.m.

A P P E A R A N C E S

MS. STEPHANIE CAREY
Chairperson to the Public Health Council

MR. PAUL ROMAN
Vice Chairperson to the Public Health Council

MS. CAROL A. CHAMBERLAIN
Public Health Council Member

DR. SUFFIYAH WEBB
Public Health Council Member

MS. ELIZABETH TINGLEY
Deputy Attorney General (DAG)

DR. RAYNARD WASHINGTON
Department of Health, Acting Commissioner

DR. NOVNEET SAHU
Public Health Services, Deputy Commissioner

MRS. ERLIN (JESS) RIVERA
Executive Secretarial Assistant

MRS. DENAY PRESSLEY
Executive Assistant

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(11:00 a.m.)

CHAIRPERSON CAREY: Good morning everybody.

Welcome to the Public Health Council meeting. May I have a -- may I have a roll call, please.

MRS. RIVERA: Good morning. We're going to call the meeting to order. My name is Erlin Rivera. Please know that we're transcribing through Teams. This is a formal meeting of the Public Health Council. Adequate notice of this meeting has been published in accordance with the provision of Chapter 231 Public Law 1975 C-10:4.10 of the State of New Jersey entitled Open Public Meetings Act.

Notice was sent to the Secretary of State who posted a notice in a public's place. Notice was also provided electronically on the -- on the department's website and the meeting days have been published in two New Jersey newspapers.

I will now call the roll. Ms. Stephanie Carey.

CHAIRPERSON CAREY: Present.

MRS. RIVERA: Mr. Paul Roman?

VICE CHAIRPERSON ROMAN: Present.

MRS. RIVERA: Mr. Michael Gross?

(No response)

MRS. RIVERA: Ms. Carol Chamberlain?

1 MS. CHAMBERLAIN: Present.

2 MRS. RIVERA: Dr. Suffiyah Webb?

3 DR. WEBB: Present.

4 MRS. RIVERA: We have four members of the
5 Council present, which does constitute a quorum. For the
6 transcription purposes, please announce your full name
7 each time before speaking. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON CAREY: Thank you, Ms. Rivera. I'm
9 Stephanie Carey, Chair of the Public Health Council, with
10 opening comments. We're gathering in person for the first
11 time since the pandemic. We are gathering today to
12 welcome our new commissioner. We gather to select our
13 leadership for the coming year.

14 New Jersey is facing challenges to health and
15 public health. There's disruptions to Medicaid. There's
16 a fiscal cliff for public health agencies. And there's
17 disruption to things like vaccination standards and other
18 long-held, evidence-based practices working with
19 like-minded states to protect the public. It's never been
20 more important to have a strong voice for public health
21 and we join you in advocating to address the upstream
22 drivers of health outcomes.

23 I'd like to welcome today Dr. Washington. He
24 comes to New Jersey with a strong public health background
25 and leadership, and a public health focus. He came from

1 North Carolina, director of a large county health
2 department, Mecklenburg County in North Carolina. More
3 locally, he was the chief epidemiologist in Philadelphia.
4 He's done research at the federal level for the Department
5 of Health and Human Services, including policies that,
6 that drove the Affordable Care Act.

7 We appreciate the public health focus you bring
8 to the -- to our leadership as we work upstream to address
9 the drivers of health outcomes. So, welcome, Dr.
10 Washington.

11 DR. WASHINGTON: Perfect, thank you. Good
12 morning, everybody. It's certainly a pleasure to be here.
13 Okay, Raynard Washington, great to be here for the
14 transcription. Good morning, great to meet you all. I
15 look forward to having some time to be able to talk and
16 get to know you all better throughout the course of the
17 coming day, and as well as the weeks. I don't know what's
18 going on with this.

19 But as you -- as you just mentioned, New Jersey
20 and our entire country is in a very unique place as it
21 relates to public health. We are facing pretty
22 significant state fiscal conditions, as well as
23 challenging a federal funding cliff that's coming our way.
24 But with all of that, our mission as an agency hasn't
25 changed. We're still here with the focus on protecting

1 and promoting health of our residents and ensuring
2 everybody can access quality health care. And so we're
3 going to continue to do that.

4 And so I look forward to working alongside you
5 all to continue to uplift the importance of public health
6 both here in our state and every county across this state,
7 and making sure that the resources that we need to get our
8 core work done is there, and that we might have to make
9 some tough decisions to focus on those things that are
10 most important and essential in terms of us delivering
11 public health for New Jersey. And so I look forward to
12 working with you guys and it's great to be here.

13 CHAIRPERSON CAREY: Going to item number --
14 going to item number five on our agenda, approval of the
15 previous meeting minutes of March 9, 2026. I would like
16 to -- I would like to call for a motion to approve those
17 minutes.

18 VICE CHAIRPERSON ROMAN: I'll move the minutes.
19 Paul Roman.

20 MS. CHAMBERLAIN: Carol Chamberlain, I'll second
21 the motion.

22 CHAIRPERSON CAREY: Thank you. May I have a
23 roll call please?

24 MRS. RIVERA: Ms. Stephanie Carey?

25 CHAIRPERSON CAREY: Yes.

1 MRS. RIVERA: Mr. Paul Roman?

2 VICE CHAIRPERSON ROMAN: Yes.

3 MRS. RIVERA: Ms. Carol Chamberlain?

4 MS. CHAMBERLAIN: Yes.

5 MRS. RIVERA: Dr. Suffiyah Webb?

6 DR. WEBB: Yes.

7 MRS. RIVERA: We have four yeses. Motion
8 carries.

9 CHAIRPERSON CAREY: Thank you. For my report, I
10 refer to my opening comments and look forward to carrying
11 on the conversation to -- on prioritizing public health
12 prevention at the community level. And being able to move
13 forward to address both some of the fiscal challenges and
14 some of the upstream boots-on-the-ground, community-based
15 prevention that is going to become even more important in
16 the coming months and years.

17 For some specific items, I turn to you, council
18 members, for any questions or comments that you wanted to
19 read into the record.

20 VICE CHAIRPERSON ROMAN: I have two items.

21 CHAIRPERSON CAREY: All right. There you go,
22 Paul.

23 VICE CHAIRPERSON ROMAN: Thank you. I'm Paul
24 Roman, vice chair, and I, I have two items I want to
25 discuss. First of all, after the last meeting, I had

1 communication with legal counsel from the AG's office
2 regarding the public health -- the public's access to
3 meetings. It seems that a decision was made to only allow
4 them when called upon to type in comments during the
5 public portion into the chat, or some such technical
6 thing.

7 I was told that because this is an advisory body
8 only, that it's up to the commissioner, who we advise, to
9 decide if the public can have full access by speaking as
10 opposed to just typing in their comments in the chat. So
11 I would like to recommend that that change be made.
12 That's number one.

13 Number two, there was an op-ed in New Jersey
14 Spotlight News just this past week, April 9th, from Dr.
15 Eddie Bresnitz, the former state epidemiologist, and Dr.
16 Fred Jacobs, the former commissioner, having to do with
17 it's two decades later since New Jersey passed the
18 anti-smoking laws. And, as Dr. Eddie Bresnitz, Dr. Eddie,
19 and Commissioner Jacobs, former Commissioner Jacobs, said,
20 it's time to update those laws and particularly to stop
21 the stonewalling of the, the -- I'm sorry, the exemption
22 for casinos.

23 There is a portion in the law that allows a
24 certain exemption for a portion of casinos where smoking
25 is allowed. And there's been a lot of fights. It's been

1 in court. And the situation has not been resolved one way
2 or the other. And I would like to see the commissioner,
3 through a recommendation of the council, to weigh in on
4 this and maybe get the legislature to do something about
5 it, or the governor, or both. Those are my two comments.

6 CHAIRPERSON CAREY: Thank you, Mr. Roman. Any
7 other comments? Dr. Webb or Ms. Chamberlain?

8 (No response)

9 CHAIRPERSON CAREY: Okay, seeing none, item
10 number eight. Do we have any items of old business?

11 (No response)

12 CHAIRPERSON CAREY: Okay, hearing none, moving
13 on to item number nine. The key -- the key action of
14 today's meeting is for our annual reorganization and
15 election of chairperson, vice chairperson. A proposal has
16 been made, and I would like to, to put in front of the
17 council a proposed slate maintaining the current slate.
18 That is myself, Stephanie Carey, as chairperson, and Paul
19 Roman as vice chairperson for the slate for the next month
20 -- the next year, pardon me, for 2026.

21 Is there a motion to place that slate into -- to
22 nominate that slate?

23 MS. CHAMBERLAIN: This is Carol Chamberlain, and
24 I will propose that we have the slate as noted by the
25 president, the chair.

1 DR. WEBB: Suffiyah Webb, second.

2 CHAIRPERSON CAREY: Thank you. May I have a
3 roll call, Ms. Rivera?

4 MRS. RIVERA: Yes. Ms. Stephanie Carey?

5 CHAIRPERSON CAREY: Yes.

6 MRS. RIVERA: Mr. Paul Roman?

7 VICE CHAIRPERSON ROMAN: Yes.

8 MRS. RIVERA: Ms. Carol Chamberlain?

9 MS. CHAMBERLAIN: Yes.

10 MRS. RIVERA: Dr. Suffiyah Webb?

11 DR. WEBB: Yes.

12 MRS. RIVERA: We have four yeses. Motion
13 carries.

14 CHAIRPERSON CAREY: Thank you.

15 VICE CHAIRPERSON ROMAN: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON CAREY: We look -- we look forward
17 to continuing to serve. We look forward to being able to
18 continue the conversations around emerging public health
19 issues and speaking out in one voice for public health.

20 Our next scheduled meeting is May 11th, which
21 will be virtual. Any other -- any other business to be
22 called forward?

23 VICE CHAIRPERSON ROMAN: Is there public on this
24 meeting or not?

25 MRS. RIVERA: No.

1 CHAIRPERSON CAREY: Are there any questions for
2 the board -- for the council, I should say?

3 MS. CHAMBERLAIN: For record purposes, was
4 Mickey able to join us?

5 MRS. RIVERA: No.

6 MS. CHAMBERLAIN: Okay, thanks.

7 CHAIRPERSON CAREY: Okay.

8 MS. CHAMBERLAIN: I don't see any questions in
9 the chat. I was watching the chat, so no.

10 CHAIRPERSON CAREY: Okay. Seeing that there are
11 no questions in the chat, I would look for a motion -- I'm
12 looking for a motion to adjourn.

13 DR. WEBB: Suffiyah Webb, making a motion to
14 adjourn.

15 MS. CHAMBERLAIN: Carol Chamberlain, I'll second
16 that motion.

17 CHAIRPERSON CAREY: Roll call.

18 MRS. RIVERA: Ms. Stephanie Cary?

19 CHAIRPERSON CAREY: Yes.

20 MRS. RIVERA: Mr. Paul Roman?

21 VICE CHAIRPERSON ROMAN: Yes.

22 MRS. RIVERA: Ms. Carol Chamberlain?

23 MS. CHAMBERLAIN: Yes.

24 MRS. RIVERA: Dr. Suffiyah Webb?

25 DR. WEBB: Yes.

1 MRS. RIVERA: Meeting adjourned. Have a great
2 day.

3 CHAIRPERSON CAREY: Thank you.

4 (Meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.)

5 CERTIFICATION

6 I, Mary E. Dring, the assigned transcriber, do
7 hereby certify that the foregoing transcript of
8 proceedings on audio recording provided, is prepared
9 in full compliance with the current Transcript Format
10 for Judicial Proceedings and is a true and accurate
11 non-compressed transcript of the proceedings as
12 recorded.

13 */s/ Mary E. Dring* *April 25, 2026*

14 MARY E. DRING, AD/T 582 Date

15 Burke Court Reporting, LLC

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