



ADVOCACY & MANAGEMENT GROUP

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June 2025 NJSSA Lobby Report

Legislative Update

For the month of June, both the Senate and the Assembly will continue to have regular committee meetings and voting sessions. June is one of the busiest months of the legislative session, as a review of the Governor's proposed budget and budget negotiations between the Legislature and the Governor also are ongoing.

The final state budget must be passed by the constitutional deadline of July 1st. Following the passage, the Legislature will likely take a recess until after the elections in November. We will continue to monitor and provide updates on all relevant legislation that moves over the next month.

S-4457 was recently introduced in the Senate by Senator Lagana, and received a vote of 3-1-1 in the Senate Commerce Committee. It has not yet been introduced in the Assembly. The bill amends statutory law to change title of "physician assistant" to "physician associate." The Access to Care Coalition testified in opposition to the bill at the committee with concerns about confusion and scope.

Ambulatory Care Facility Assessment: The Governor's FY26 budget includes a proposal to reduce the Ambulatory Care Facility (ACF) assessment rate from 2.95% to 2.5%, but eliminates the current \$350,000 cap and \$300,000 floor. This change would generate over \$60 million in revenue and align the policy with federal Medicaid requirements.

Department of Health Update: It was recently announced that the New Jersey Department of Health Commissioner, Dr. Kaitlan Baston, has been appointed as interim CEO of University Hospital, effective May 3, 2025. Governor Murphy further announced that Jeff Brown – the current Deputy Commissioner for Health Systems at the New Jersey Department of Health will serve as Acting Health Commissioner.

Brown previously served as the Deputy Commissioner of Health Systems at the New Jersey Department of Health, overseeing inspections and the enforcement of regulations for approximately 2,200 licensed New Jersey health care facilities; over 2,700 mental health and addiction services and programs; the Certificate of Need Program; the Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency; and major hospital funding programs such as Charity Care, Graduate Medical Education, and the Quality Improvement Performance Program. Prior to becoming Deputy Commissioner, Brown served as the first Executive Director of the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission, where he was responsible for organizational strategy, policy, and management of a new State commission, and as Assistant Commissioner for Medicinal Marijuana under the Department of Health. His work included expanding access to the medicinal marijuana program from 17,000 patients to more than 125,000

patients, leading and overseeing the first-ever comprehensive regulations to underpin New Jersey's personal use cannabis industry, developing one of the most innovative laws and tax structures for cannabis sales in the country, and managing the regulatory oversight of a new billion-dollar industry.

Meeting Update

Asw. Murphy was recently named the new Assembly Health Committee chairwoman following now-Congressman Conaway's move to Congress at the beginning of the year. This position is one of the most influential on health policy in the legislature. Given this, on Tuesday, April 15th, the AMG team and the rest of the Access to Care Coalition met with her and had some in-depth discussion on many of the issues that we focus on. Overall, it was a good conversation and we anticipate many more in the future where we can continue to serve as a resource to her as she navigates the new roll.

Election Update

This November, the full State Assembly and the Governor are all up for election, with the primary election being held on June 10th, 2025. Many candidates on both sides of the aisle are running. According to a few polls, Republican Jack Ciattarelli is the favorite to get the nomination as the Republican candidate, running against radio host Bill Spadea, and State Senator Jon Bramnick. Since our last update, former State Senator Ed Durr has dropped out of the race.

There is a big pool of candidates on the Democratic side, that are all fairly well known and well-funded, including Congresswoman Mikie Sherill, Congressman Josh Gottheimer, Newark Mayor Ras Baraka, former-Senate President Steve Sweeney, Jersey City Mayor Steve Fulop and NJEA President Sean Spiller.