Testifying before the Senate Budget Committee this month, I highlighted core Department programs that invest in our health care safety net and support services to New Jersey’s most vulnerable populations.

The Department’s proposed budget would total $1.9 billion. SFY 2013 provides more than $1 billion to ensure access to services for the uninsured. Federally Qualified Health Centers will receive $46.4 million in reimbursement, a record high. And hospitals will receive $961 million in subsidies to support their services to the uninsured.

This year’s charity care formula reflects changes based on feedback we received from the Legislature and hospital industry. The changes are designed to make the formula more predictable, transparent and equitable. In addition, the formula appropriately aligns incentives for providing charity care. Every hospital with an increase in care will see an increase in its subsidy and every hospital with a decrease in care will see a decrease in its subsidy.

New Jersey hospitals provide excellent care, even when they face challenging circumstances. This is a time of great transformation for our hospitals. Some have merged into larger systems. Others have moved into state-of-the-art facilities. In addition, national and local for profit hospitals have expressed interest in bringing capital to invest in New Jersey’s healthcare delivery system. All New Jersey hospitals—regardless of whether they are for profit or nonprofit—are inspected by the Department, mandated to provide charity care, monitored through our early warning system and required to report on their quality performance.

The proposed budget also preserves New Jersey’s long standing commitment to services that provide screening for children and adults to ensure that care is delivered early to improve outcomes.

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The proposed budget also preserves New Jersey’s long standing commitment to services that provide screening for children and adults to ensure that care is delivered early to improve outcomes. The newborn screening program, which receives $6.5 million in state funds, received national attention last summer when a newborn’s life was saved at Newton Memorial Hospital in Sussex County. A first-in-the-nation law signed by Governor Christie required infants to be screened for heart defects before they leave the hospital.

Funding was also maintained for another safety net program, the New Jersey Cancer Education and Early Detection Program—NJCEED—which provides cancer screening for nearly 22,000 low-income individuals. The program is funded at $6 million.

Early Intervention Program

New Jersey prides itself on providing support services for our most vulnerable citizens. One such program is the Department’s Early Intervention Program (EIP) that identifies...
Cooper Breaks Ground on New Cancer Institute in Camden

This month, The Cooper Health System celebrated the official groundbreaking for its new state-of-the-art cancer treatment center on the Cooper Health Sciences Campus. The four-story, 103,050 square foot Cooper Cancer Institute will expand access to cancer care in South Jersey by providing a full range of cancer care services and specialists all under one roof.

Cooper’s administrators and Board leadership participated in the groundbreaking along with business, community and elected officials from throughout New Jersey, including N.J. Governor Chris Christie, N.J. Senator Stephen Sweeney, and Camden City Mayor Dana Redd. The event was held at the site of the new building, on the corner of Martin Luther King Boulevard and Haddon Avenue. It is the newest addition to the Cooper Health Sciences campus in Camden, joining the Cooper Medical School of Rowan University, which will open this July.

The new Cooper Cancer Institute will provide a full range of specialists and cancer care services with the benefit of patients having all their medical needs in one place. Cooper has a long history of providing care to cancer patients, dating back to 1887 when the hospital first opened its doors. Today, the Cooper Cancer Institute is accredited by the American College of Surgeons’ Commission on Cancer as an Academic Comprehensive Cancer Program and is the only cancer program in South Jersey to be included in the prestigious network of institutions that make up the Cancer Institute of New Jersey (CINJ). As a major Clinical Research Affiliate of CINJ, Cooper provides patients with access to the latest clinical trials, therapies and available technology.
After more than a year of planning, the University Medical Center of Princeton (UMCPP) officially opened its doors to patients on May 22. Over seven hours, medical teams transferred 110 patients from the University Medical Center at Princeton to the new hospital via ambulance.

“The new University Medical Center of Princeton at Plainsboro is officially open,” said Barry Rabner, president and CEO of Princeton HealthCare System. “Our organization and the community we serve have been focused on this day for nine years. We could not be more proud, more excited and more optimistic about our opportunity to provide outstanding health care in the future. I commend our staff, the emergency medical technicians and paramedics, police officers and the entire community for their help with the move.”

Within nine hours after the hospital opened, 65 patients were treated in the Emergency Department, six patients were admitted, two babies were born and a surgeon completed an unplanned surgery in one of the new operating rooms.

Rabner along with Mark Jones, president of UMCPP, greeted patients as they were wheeled through the doors to the new hospital and up to their patient rooms.

“We have been planning and practicing for this move for more than a year,” said Jones. “Our goal was to keep our patients and their families safe and comfortable throughout the transition. We are pleased that the move went very smoothly.”

UMCPP was designed by some of the world’s leading architects, designers, health planners and engineers – with significant input from physicians, nurses, other caregivers and patients.

The new hospital replaces the University Medical Center of Princeton, which opened in 1919 on Witherspoon Street in Princeton.
Demonstrating its ability to collaborate with a wide range of partners in developing and implementing new technical advancements to enhance the delivery of public health services to New Jersey residents, the Public Health and Environmental Laboratories (PHEL) was presented the Gold Standard for Public Health Laboratory Excellence Award by the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL).

Christopher Rinn, Assistant Commissioner for PHILEP (Public Health Infrastructure and Environmental Laboratories), and Onesia Bishop, PhD, PHEL Director, accepted the award for DHSS at the APHL annual meeting on May 22.

The award highlighted collaboration between laboratory staff and its external partners and stakeholders.

Significant advancements included:

- PHEL moved to a new facility, consolidating laboratory facilities with the New Jersey Department of Agriculture. This transition was accomplished with no downtime for clinical services and did not delay the need for recertification of portions of the Environmental Laboratory facilities.

- PHEL staff developed a new method for isotopic analysis of uranium in water. The procedure was granted approval by the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as an Alternate Test Procedure (ATP).

- PHEL's Newborn Screening program became one of the first states in the country to use PerkinElmer Genetic Screening Processors (GSPs), which allows the lab to run multiple tests on small samples at one time. The Newborn Screening and Genetic Services Follow Up Program within the Division of Family Health Services, works in collaboration with the lab to ensure testing of newborns, rapid location, follow up and referral of newborns that screen positive for disorders.

- PHEL staff instituted a new test for the diagnosis of latent TB infection. This more specific and sensitive test has reduced the number of false positive test results, reduced the risks associated with unnecessary treatment and improved productivity in TB clinics statewide.

- The Influenza Surveillance Unit of the Communicable Disease Service and PHEL staff collaborated to enhance influenza surveillance efforts statewide. Enhancements included the addition of common respiratory viruses to testing panels that helped identify flu trends and other respiratory illnesses.
The New Jersey Workplace Blood Donor Coalition, co-sponsored by the Department of Health and Senior Services and Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation, launched a statewide summer-long blood drive campaign on Memorial Day to encourage employers to hold workplace blood drives during the summer. Letters co-signed by Commissioner O’Dowd and Coalition Chairman Kevin Rigby, Vice President of Public Affairs and Communications for Novartis, went out to more than 420 New Jersey businesses to announce the campaign.

Blood donations always decrease in the summer due to people going on vacation and breaking from their regular work routines. Commissioner Mary E. O’Dowd and members of the coalition led a conference call with health and business leaders on May 31 asking them to host blood drives at their workplaces. Commissioner O’Dowd also asked fellow cabinet officers to hold blood drives at their agencies this summer.

The Coalition, comprised of New Jersey businesses, associations and government agencies, promotes workplace blood drives to increase the state’s blood supply. Hospitals need blood every day to treat injuries; illnesses such as cancer, sickle cell, hemophilia, and anemia; and for use during surgery.

There is no substitute for blood. The human body is the only “manufacturer,” and blood donors save lives. A single pint of blood – the standard donation – can save up to three lives.

In these tough economic times it is important for businesses to do whatever they can to encourage blood donation and build a culture of giving blood in New Jersey’s workplaces and communities. New Jersey businesses can help to alleviate the state’s blood shortage by scheduling summer drives and encouraging employee participation. These drives can be creative and even fun.

Ideas include holding a Pint for a Pint drive with a local ice cream store by giving donors a coupon for the flavor of their choice. Partner with a local movie theater to give away tickets for a summer blockbuster. Celebrate summer sports with tickets to a baseball game.

Around the 4th of July, hold a blood drive to “Salute A Veteran” by enabling donors to honor veterans and active-duty service men and women by providing the name and address of someone they know who has served, and send them a card in their honor. Post their names on the company’s website.

Companies that have a blood drive planned are asked to consider holding an additional one between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

Companies that do not currently hold blood drives are asked to consider holding one this summer or join with other businesses to hold a community blood drive. Local blood centers can help plan and organize drives. For contact information visit the Coalition’s website at www.njsave3lives.com, and learn more about the summer campaign at http://www.state.nj.us/health/njsave3lives/summer_campaign.shtml.
May is National Asthma and Hepatitis Awareness Month

Asthma is chronic disease that affects 179,000 children and 579,000 adults in New Jersey. Although there is no cure, the disease is manageable if those affected work with their health care providers to take precautions and learn the symptoms and triggers of asthma.

Asthma can be triggered by environmental factors such as dust, tobacco smoke, automobile emissions, pet dander and mold. Non-environmental factors such as cold or flu, strenuous exercise, and allergies can also be contributing factors. Once triggered, the pathways that carry air to the lungs become restricted and mucus production is increased. As a result, breathing becomes more difficult, leading to the onset of coughing and shortness of breath.

The Henry J. Austin Health Center in Trenton and the Hispanic Center of Southern New Jersey in Camden each received $100,000 last year in Community Health Mobilization Grants from the Department’s Office of Minority and Multicultural Health to reduce pediatric asthma emergency department visits and related school absences. You can learn more about these grants by visiting: http://www.state.nj.us/cgi-bin/dhss/njnewsline/view_article.pl?id=3792

For more information on Asthma in New Jersey please visit: http://www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/asthma/index.shtml

Hepatitis

Approximately 135,000 people are infected with hepatitis C and 65,000 people are infected with hepatitis B in New Jersey. Without proper treatment and diagnosis hepatitis can lead to liver cancer and other life-threatening illnesses.

The CDC, on May 18, issued draft guidelines proposing that all U.S. baby boomers get a one-time test for the hepatitis C virus. The CDC believes this approach will address the largely preventable consequences of this disease, especially in light of newly available therapies that can cure up to 75 percent of infections.

“Hepatitis C is a silent epidemic because many people are not aware they have the virus,” said Commissioner Mary E. O’Dowd. “The CDC has developed an online tool that people can use to determine if they are at risk. I would encourage New Jersey residents to use the CDC tool and then to get tested for hepatitis if they are at risk.” The assessment tool is available at: http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/riskassessment/

One in 30 baby boomers – the generation born from 1945 through 1965 – has been infected with hepatitis C, and most don’t know it. Current CDC guidelines call for testing only individuals with certain known risk factors for hepatitis C infection. But studies find that many baby boomers do not perceive themselves to be at risk and are not being tested.

No vaccine exists for hepatitis C. The best way to prevent hepatitis A and B is by getting vaccinated.

Information about hepatitis can be found at the DHSS website: http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/hepatitisc/index.shtml

Also on the CDC webpage at: http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/HepAwarenessMonth.htm
Osteoporosis is known as the “silent disease” because it robs bone density and strength without any warning signs to the person who is affected. In most cases, individuals don’t know they have osteoporosis until after they have fallen and suffer a fracture. Osteoporosis is a serious health issue both nationally and here in New Jersey.

**In the United States:**
- More than 11 million Americans are living with osteoporosis
- 35 million more have low bone mass, placing them at risk for this disease
- Half of all women will have an osteoporosis-related fracture in their lifetime
- One in four men older than 50 will have an osteoporosis-related fracture in his lifetime

**In New Jersey:**
- Approximately 1 million residents have low bone mass
- An estimated 7,500 hip fractures occur annually in adults 65 years and older
- The cost per hip fracture with hospitalization ranges from $18,000-$27,000

Osteoporosis and related fractures are preventable. A balanced diet rich in calcium and vitamin D and taking appropriate supplements, when necessary, have proven effective, in combating the disease.

Additionally, exercise and avoiding smoking and excessive salt or alcohol can help mitigate the effects of Osteoporosis. Early diagnosis and treatment, as well as fall prevention strategies can also stop Osteoporosis and help ensure continued health and independence.

As May is Osteoporosis Awareness Month, DHSS and the New Jersey Interagency Council on Osteoporosis are encouraging older adults with, or at risk of developing osteoporosis to participate in one of two peer-led programs available in their community:

- **Project Healthy Bones** is a community-based, peer-led, 24-week low impact exercise and educational program meant for those with low bone mass and osteoporosis. The program has been available in New Jersey since 1997.
- **A Matter of Balance** is an evidence-based and peer-led fall prevention program that is new to New Jersey. Currently available in eight counties, the program is designed to increase activity levels of older adults while reducing the fear of falling.

Individuals interested in learning more on how to build and protect bones can do so by visiting the Division on Aging and Community Services website at [www.aging.nj.gov](http://www.aging.nj.gov), or by calling 609-633-8746.

**Check out these related links:**
- Osteoporosis -- [http://www.state.nj.us/health/senior/osteo/whatis.shtml](http://www.state.nj.us/health/senior/osteo/whatis.shtml)
- Project Healthy Bones -- [http://www.state.nj.us/health/senior/healthease.shtml#project](http://www.state.nj.us/health/senior/healthease.shtml#project)
Women’s Health

10 The percentage of mothers in New Jersey who give birth prematurely
10 The approximate percentage of women in New Jersey with asthma
23 The percentage of New Jersey women who are obese
40 The age at which every woman should receive an annual mammogram
50 The percentage of women who will have an “osteoporosis-related” fracture in their lifetime
52/60 Women account for 52% of deaths due to diseases of the heart and 60% of stroke deaths in New Jersey each year
81.9 The life expectancy for women in New Jersey
12,000 The number of New Jersey women who die of heart disease and stroke each year in New Jersey
102,000 The approximate number of babies born in New Jersey each year

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diagnoses and cares for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs). The program is funded at nearly $140 million and serves infants and toddlers up to age three who have developmental delays and disabilities including autism.

In addition, the Department has continued funding for our Autism Registry that makes it easier for families to be connected to the appropriate diagnostic treatment and support services. And this year, the Governor’s Council for Research and Treatment of Autism will award up to $8 million in grants and establish a NJ Autism Center for Excellence.

Medicinal Marijuana

Another area of significant public interest has been the ongoing implementation of the Department’s Medicinal Marijuana Program. The Governor’s proposed budget includes $784,000 to support the staffing and operation of the program.

The Department is committed to ensuring that medicinal marijuana is safely and securely available to patients as quickly as possible. To ensure the integrity of the program, we have implemented a thorough yet efficient permitting process. In November, we provided disclosure and permitting forms for ATCs. In December, we hired a full time Director for the program and adopted regulations. Last month, we provided the first permit to grow medicinal marijuana to an ATC in New Jersey and have conducted remote and on-site inspections of the cultivation facility. In addition, we released the names of physicians who have voluntarily registered to participate in the program. The physician registry now includes more than 130 physicians.

The Department is committed to implementing this program and I believe we have struck an appropriate balance between public safety and access for qualified patients.
May 2012

Community Outreach & Events

May 1 – Commissioner O'Dowd attended the New Jersey Hospital Association's CEO Conference in Atlantic City.

May 8 – Commissioner O'Dowd delivered keynote remarks at the Health Care Association of New Jersey's Annual Assisted Living Conference.

May 14 – Bill Conroy, Acting Deputy Commissioner, Senior Services and Health Systems, honored Osteoporosis Prevention and Education Volunteers and Professionals as part of Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month.

May 15 – Dr. Arturo Brito, Deputy Commissioner of Public Health Services, attended the New Jersey Association of Blood Bank Professionals Annual Meeting at RWJH in New Brunswick.

May 15 – Bill Conroy, Acting Deputy Commissioner, Senior Services and Health Systems and Cathleen Bennett, Director of Policy and Strategic Planning, took part in the Council on State Public Affairs: New Jersey State of Health 2012 Conference at the Trenton Marriott.

May 17 – Ruth Charbonneau, Chief of Staff, delivered opening remarks at the DHSS Annual Women’s Caregiver Retreat at the Robert Wood Johnson Center on Health and Wellness.

May 29 – Commissioner O'Dowd visited the Central Jersey Family Health Consortium to highlight a $9.4 million grant to expand New Jersey's home visiting programs. The consortium is located in North Brunswick.

CAMcare, the largest provider of primary and dental care in Camden, celebrated Minority and Multicultural Health Month and Immunizations Awareness Week by sponsoring Walk a Mile, Save a Child on April 27, 2012. With the support of four local daycare providers (Camden Day, El Centro Daycare, Head Start – Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Daycare), more than 150 children and adults participated in the walk which ended at Camden’s Children's Garden and Adventure Aquarium where Gill, the Adventure Aquarium's mascot, greeted the children.

According to the CDC, vaccines are among the most successful and cost effective public health tools available for preventing disease and death. CAMcare continues to excel in the area of childhood immunizations and has been recognized for its outstanding contributions and commitment to the New Jersey Immunization Information System (NJIISS) since its inception. As a pilot organization for the NJIISS, CAMcare continues to champion the cause for childhood immunizations and understands its relevance in eliminating health disparities in our community.
4-23-12: Beverly Sce, Ph.D., coordinator of the DHSS Children’s Oral Health Program gave a presentation on the DHSS “Sugar-Less Day to Prevent Tooth Decay 2012” initiative that improves oral health in fourth grade students at selected schools across the state. The program was featured in the American Dental Association (ADA) news of April 23, 2012.

5-7-12 – 5-9-12: Diana Garzio, Public Health Consultant Nursing and State Representative to the Association of State and Territorial Directors of Nursing (ASTDN), attended the organization’s Annual Conference. ASTDN is an advisory group consisting of DHSS nurses that help guide public health nurses on best practices and innovations.

5/9/12 - 5/10/12: Carol Genese, Coordinator DHSS Infectious Disease Team, attended the Disaster Epidemiology Workshop that was held to improve national disaster coordination, preparedness and response capabilities of DHSS and other state, local and national emergency response agencies.

5/9/12 - 5/12/12: Colette Lamothe-Galette, from the DHSS Office of Policy and Strategic Planning represented DHSS at the National Public Health Improvement Initiative (NPHII) meeting: Strengthening Public Health Infrastructure for Improved Health Outcomes. The primary goal was to expand knowledge and skills among performance improvement staff, and support and sustain best practices.

5-20-12: Angela Giordano, RN, BSN, Acting Field Office Manager and Program Support Specialist gave a presentation on the effective application of Pre Admission Screen Review, (PASRR) in assessing and providing services for older adults with mental illness at the Strategies in Enhancing Collaborative Care for Older Adults educational conference.

5/25/12: James Bruncati, Research Scientist/Regional Coordinator, showcased DHSS’s Mobile Satellite Emergency Department with representatives from the Urban Area Security Initiative, the New Jersey Emergency Medical State Task Force (NJEMSTF), and Hackensack University Medical Center at the Public Health, Preparedness and Response Training Summit.

**New Pulse Oximetry Law Saving Lives of Newborns**

On June 1, 2011 New Jersey became the first state in the nation to mandate newborn pulse oximetry screenings, a test that helps detect critical congenital heart disease (CCHD) in newborns. Within the first three months of the new laws adoption, two infants were diagnosed with CCHD. The infants may have suffered devastating health consequences if not for the additional testing.

New Jersey’s efforts have been recognized nationally in an editorial in the esteemed medical journal, “The Lancet,” on May 2, 2012.
Office of Emergency Medical Services

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Week was established by an Act of Congress in 1973 and was first commemorated in May 1974 as a way to thank EMS practitioners for the remarkable job they do each day. The celebration is held annually during the third full week of May. This year, EMS week was held Sunday, May 20 through Saturday, May 26. For the 10th consecutive year, Wednesday, May 23 was designated as EMS for Children (EMS-C) Day, a day when EMS services are encouraged to focus on the needs of children and promote safety activities and information for children.

For more than 40 years, EMS professionals have been on the front lines of answering 9-1-1 calls. EMS practitioners don’t choose this field for big salaries, comfortable working conditions or 9-to-5 hours. They have a true calling to help and care for others.

Austin the Unstoppable at the George Street Play House

Thanks to the coordinated efforts of DHSS, the ShapingNJ Coalition and DHSS community partners, the Horizon Foundation for New Jersey has committed $100,000 to provide scholarships for schools throughout the state to see the performance, “Austin the Unstoppable” at the George Street Playhouse. The funding will allow 80 schools and almost 25,000 students to experience this remarkable production. http://www.georgestreetplayhouse.org/touringproductions/austintheunstoppable

Early Learning Commission Holds Kickoff Meeting

On May 18, Commissioner O’Dowd joined Acting Commissioner of Education Chris Cerf, Children and Families Commissioner Alison Blake and Human Services Commissioner Jennifer Velez at the kick off meeting of New Jersey’s Early Learning Commission. Governor Christie created this Commission to bring together several departments to focus on improving early education and development in our state.

For all New Jersey children to enter kindergarten with the tools to succeed—they need access to quality daycare and preschool programs. Successful programs require exceptional educators, comprehensive curriculum, meaningful standards for measuring child growth and development, and the support of strong community programs to assist families.

Recognizing that early childhood success goes beyond just the silo of education, the Departments of Education, Children and Families, Human Services and Health and Senior Services will examine the best ways to coordinate programs, budgets and delivery of services to better support infants and young children and families in our state. Through the Commission, the Departments will share data to better align resources, promote greater access to quality information on daycare center and preschools, and consider methods to enhance curriculum at these sites.

The Commission will meet regularly and will formulate recommendations on improving the quality of and access to early learning and development programs in New Jersey.