


# Healthcare Powerlist 2025

*Recognizing the 50 Most Influential Leaders  
Shaping Healthcare in New Jersey.*



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# The 50 Most Influential Voices in New Jersey Healthcare

by Max Pizarro, *Editor, InsiderNJ*



President Donald Trump's proposed federal cuts would have devastating repercussions in the areas of healthcare and health research, and deep economic consequences in New Jersey, home to the world's largest pharmaceutical companies.

Trump relies on another billionaire, Elon Musk, to chainsaw \$880 billion from the Energy and Commerce Committee, mostly coming from Medicaid. The main government program covering health care insurance and long-term care, Medicaid covers approximately 83 million Americans. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF), Medicaid spending ac-

counts for one-fifth of health care spending, more than half of spending for long-term care and a large share of state budgets.

Real people will get hurt, and the Trump-saddled GOP knows it.

In the words of U.S. Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-12): "News has emerged that Republicans across the country are cancelling their town halls after blowback from constituents following cuts to vital services. My Republican colleagues must justify their votes to cut healthcare for 700,000 New Jerseyans on Medicaid in order to pay for a \$4.5 trillion tax cut for

the superrich and corporations. They need to explain their votes to their constituents at public town halls. I will be happy to travel to Tom Kean's district, Chris Smith's district, or Jeff Van Drew's district to help them explain their vote to their Constituents."

The congresswoman was true to her word, going to Pleasantville, which is in Van Drew's South Jersey district. In that district, over 176,000 people rely on Medicaid, including more than 82,000 children and 17,000 seniors. The Republican budget resolution that Van Drew voted for puts their access to affordable healthcare at risk, while ballooning the deficit and giving the very richest Americans trillions of dollars in tax breaks.

In addition, "As I mentioned on the House Floor... Tom Kean represents 70,000 people who receive their healthcare through Medicaid and are at risk of losing their coverage under the Republican Budget," Watson Coleman added. "...I think my colleagues should help their concerned constituents understand what they should do when they lose their coverage. I'm happy to help facilitate those discussions."

The GOP won't want to have those



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conversations with Watson Coleman, though, probably because they know “the cuts would help finance \$4.5 trillion in tax breaks for very wealthy people and for large corporations, extending provisions of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act,” according to the Southern Poverty Law Center. “More than half of the tax cuts would benefit the top 5% of households or those making more than \$450,000 in annual income, according to an analysis from the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center. (The Budget Lab at Yale released a similar report with a detailed breakdown.)”

That’s just scratching the surface of the proposed impacts to not only healthcare but healthcare research.

Reeling but committed to solidarity from the labs to the streets and ready for a long, tough fight, Rutgers University scientists, educators and staff last month called attention to the ravaging, destabilizing impact of Trump administration funding cuts, freezes, and policy changes on life-saving medical research and public higher education.

Trump’s anti-science crusade resulted in the freezing of federal grants, sweeping layoffs across federal agencies, and funding cuts for biomedical research.

Dr. Monica Driscoll, a molecular biologist and biochemist who specializes in neuro-degenerative disease research, said, “I love the way

the U.S. has done science – at least in the past.”

But now, “I am stunned and devastated by this government-mediated dismantling of an incredibly successful scientific enterprise,” she said, in a packed general-purpose room in the Life Sciences Building on the Busch Campus.

In the coming days and months, as Musk – under Trump’s command – cuts loose, the New Jersey leaders on this list below will continue to find themselves embroiled, facing consequences weightier than who wins or loses an intellectual debate, and more along the lines of who can help Musk start up or shut down his runaway, flailing chainsaw.



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# 1. Frank Pallone

*Ranking Member, House Energy Commerce Committee*

The long-serving progressive Democrat from Long Branch now assumes the frontline of perhaps the most important battle of his career as he fights MAGA Republicans who want to gut Medicaid.



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# 2. Herb Conaway

*Congressman, CD-3*

Formerly the longtime chair of the Assembly Healthcare Committee, medical doctor Conaway brings considerable professional and legislative experience to his new job in the U.S. House of Representatives. Also an Army veteran, Conaway serves as a member of the Subcommittee on Health for the House Veterans Affairs Committee.



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# 3. Joyce P. Hendricks

*Chief Development Officer, Hackensack Meridian Foundation*

Former manager of a \$120 million annual program for Johnson & Johnson, and former leader of a \$1 billion fundraising effort for Rutgers University Foundation, Hendricks also served as the chief philanthropy officer of the Institute of International Education (IIE) in New York, responsible for \$50 million for IIE's centennial. Responsible at Hackensack Meridian for "fundraising and administrative services, structures, policies and procedures, best practice development and the fundraising strategic plan for the entire network."



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## 4. Jeffrey Boscamp

*President and Dean, Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine*

The former Marvin I. Gottlieb, M.D., Ph.D., Endowed Chair of Pediatrics at the Joseph M. Sanzari Children's Hospital, Boscamp founded the Section of Pediatric Infectious Diseases and the Steven Bader Immunological Institute at Hackensack University Medical Center. He has served as President and Dean at Hackensack Meridian since 2022.



## 5. Joe Vitale

*Chair, Senate Health Committee*

Among his peers, the Woodbridge Township-based Vitale – a member of the state senate since 1998 - has amassed the most legislative experience and knowledge about healthcare. Frequently mentioned as a possible candidate for the state senate presidency.



## 6. Niranjana Rao

*MD Chief Medical Officer, St. Peter's University Hospital*

A vascular and general surgeon at St. Peter's, Rao specializes in the clinical management of carotid artery disease, abdominal aortic aneurysms, and peripheral vascular disease. A graduate of M.R. Medical College in India, he completed his residency in general surgery at the Albert Einstein Healthcare Network in Philadelphia, PA.



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## 7. Andy Kim

*Member, Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee*

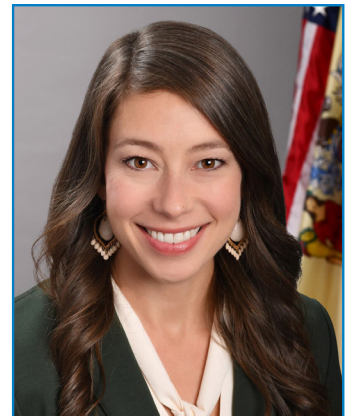
First elected last year to the United States Senate, Kim recorded his most significant vote last month when he opposed Robert Kennedy, President Donald Trump’s nominee to serve as Secretary of Health and Human Services. Kim objected to Kennedy by citing the nominee’s conspiracy theories regarding polio and Lyme’s disease. “Our health care is far from perfect, and we do need major reforms to get it in a place where it can better serve the American people,” Kim said. “We do need massive changes in the way our healthcare, childcare, eldercare and nutrition systems are run – but not without trust.”



## 8. Kaitlan Baston MD

*New Jersey Health Commissioner*

Former leader of the Cooper Hospital Center for Healing, and former Medical Director of Government Relations at Cooper, Baston succeeded Judy Persichilli as Health Commissioner following the latter’s 2023 resignation.



## 9. Maureen Cernadas

*MD President, St. Peter’s University Hospital*

An Obstetrics/Gynecology physician and member of the Board of Governors of Saint Peter’s Healthcare System, Cernadas specializes in delivering first rate clinical care.



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## 10. Mark E. Manigan

*President and Chief Executive Officer, RWJBarnabas*

Having served on both Gov. Phil Murphy's and Gov. Chris Christie's healthcare transition teams, Manigan joined RWJBarnabas Health in 2019 and later served as Chief Strategy and Business Development Officer. Named President of RWJBarnabas Health in 2022, adding the Chief Executive Officer title in January of 2023.



## 11. George Helmy

*Executive Vice President, Chief External Affairs and Policy Officer, RWJBarnabas*

As wired into the political/governmental grid as anybody in the state, the former chief of staff to Governor Phil Murphy during the COVID-19 epidemic, Helmy also served as state director for U.S. Senator Cory Booker.



## 12. Kevin O'Dowd

*Co-President/CEO, Cooper University Healthcare*

Former counsel and former chief-of-staff to Governor Chris Christie, O'Dowd became Cooper's Chief Administrative Officer and Co-President in 2018. In 2019, the Cooper University Health Care Board of Trustees named O'Dowd Co-Chief Executive Officer.





Pictured above:

**Sean M. Spiller**, President (center)

**Steve Beatty**, Vice President (left)

**Petal Robertson**, Secretary-Treasurer (right)

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## 13. Chris James

*Vice President, Government Affairs, RWJBarnabas*

Essex County Council President James Chair has extensive experience in public service, including membership in the New Jersey Democratic Municipal Officials, Co-Chair NJ Democratic State Committee Black Caucus, Board President NJ Shares, NJ Legislative Black Caucus Foundation, Essex County Democratic County Committee, President Emeritus of the NJ Young Democrats, as Past Chair of Young Democrats of America States Presidents Association, an advisory board member on the Housing and Neighborhood Development Services, Inc. (HANDS) and former member of the Essex County Vocational School Board.



## 14. Carol Murphy

*Chair, Assembly Health Committee*

Defeated by slate mate Conaway in the 2024 Democratic Primary for the CD-3 seat, Murphy subsequently assumed the powerful Assembly chairmanship of Conaway's former committee.



## 15. Dr. Monica Driscoll

*Rutgers University Molecular Biologist and Biochemist*

Elected to the National Academy of Science in 2023, Distinguished Professor Driscoll studies the basic biology of aging with a focus on molecular mechanisms of health-span extension via genetic, chemical, and exercise interventions.





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## 16. Dr. Karen Schindler

*Rutgers University Geneticist*

A leader in studying the causes of infertility, miscarriage and, in the case of live birth, developmental disorders such as Down Syndrome.



## 17. Nancy Munoz

*Assemblywoman, Nurse*

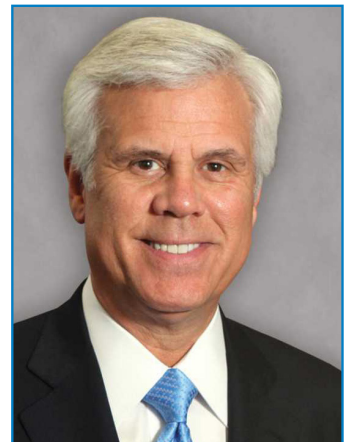
Veteran GOP lawmaker Munoz of LD-21 commands respect among fellow healthcare professionals. Sponsor of A944, which would eliminate practice restrictions for advanced practice nurses (APNs), including restrictions that limit the ability of APNs to prescribe medications and administer anesthesia, and establishes new requirements for APNs to prescribe medications.



## 18. George Norcross

*Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Cooper Health System*

A judge this year threw out the corruption case filed against him by the state Attorney General's Office, putting the South Jersey Democratic Party Powerbroker back in the thick of the political wars.



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## 19. Debbie White

*Registered Nurse and President of Health Professionals and Allied Employees (HPAE)*

A 36-year RN and head of the state's largest healthcare union, White leads New Jersey as a proponent for solutions to the state's hospital staffing crisis.



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## 20. Dr. Anita Siu

*Chair of the New Jersey Pharmacy Board, BCPPS*

A clinical professor and Vice Chair for Teaching and Learning, and Director of Faculty Mentoring at the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy at Rutgers



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## 21. Stacey Rifkin-Zenenberg, D.O.

*Pediatric Hematology/Oncology*

The pediatric hematologist and oncologist at Hackensack Meridian Health's Joseph M. Sanzari Children's Hospital oversaw a 2023 medical breakthrough transplant, which cured a New Jersey boy of sickle cell anemia.







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## 22. Amy Mansue

*President & CEO of Inspira Health Network*

Former Executive Vice President and Chief Experience Officer for RWJBarnabas Health and President, Southern Region, RWJBarnabas Health; President and Chief Executive Officer of Children's Specialized Hospital; and Chief Strategy Officer, Robert Wood Johnson Health System. Experienced.



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## 23. Christina Tan

*State Epidemiologist, State of New Jersey*

Assistant Commissioner, Epidemiology, Environmental and Occupational Health, State of NJ. In the trenches providing regular updates during the COVID era.



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## 24. John McKeon

*Essex-based Senator, LD-27; Member, Assembly Health Committee*

Highly regarded, results-driven veteran lawmaker, McKeon of West Orange generally gets that phone call on matters of a delicate and complex legislative nature.





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## 25. Nareshkumar Jain, Ph.D.

*Chief Executive Officer and Board Member, NJ Bio Pharmaceuticals LLC*

Former Global Head of Chemistry and Senior Vice-President of ADC Biomanufacturing at Abzena, and founder of the chemistry based CRO, The Chemistry Research Solution LLC (TCRS).



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## 26. Tom Kean, Jr.

*Member, House Energy and Commerce Committee*

Formerly state Senate Republican Leader, Kean in 2022 picked off U.S. Rep. Tom Malinowski to win the battleground congressional seat. He subsequently enjoyed the benefit of redistricting to gain a Republican registration cushion of nearly 20,000 votes.



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## 27. Rob Menendez

*Member, House Energy and Commerce Committee*

Son of former United States Senator Bob Menendez. Based in Jersey City, Hudson County.







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## 28. Ed Jimenez

*CEO, University Hospital*

New Jersey native Jimenez previously served as CEO of the University of Florida Health Shands Hospital.

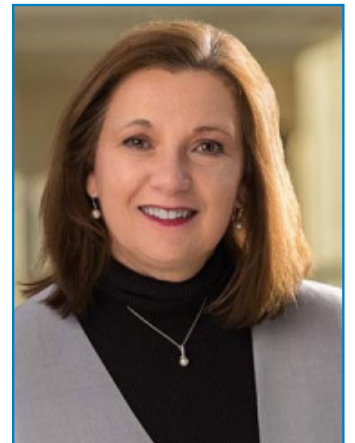


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## 29. Tricia O'Keefe, RN

*President, Morristown Medical Center*

O'Keefe also serves as Senior Vice President and Chief Nurse Executive, Atlantic Health System.



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## 30. MaryPat Sullivan

*Chief Nursing Officer, Overlook Medical Center*

Having joined Overlook as CNO in 2007, Sullivan specializes in the implementation of programs that provide pre-hospitalization, acute care, and post-hospitalization transitions of care.







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## 31. Ann Twomey

*HPAE Founder*

Since 1974, under the leadership of nurse Twomey, HPAE has led numerous public campaigns designed to protect patient care and working conditions in NJ hospitals, including a ban on forced overtime for RNs, public disclosure of staffing levels, transparency at for-profit hospitals and a ban on surprise medical bills. During her tenure, the union grew from 250 members at Englewood Hospital and Medical Center to nearly 14,000 nurses and health professionals across New Jersey and Philadelphia.



## 32. Ulises Diaz

*Senior Vice President of Government and Community Affairs at Horizon*

Leader of the Government Affairs and Community Relations team, representing Horizon before the New Jersey Legislature and New Jersey departments and agencies. Responsible for federal delegation and the Horizon Foundation for New Jersey.



## 33. Kathleen Smith

*Loria Atlantic NeuroCare*

Respected business consultant for Atlantic Brain and Spine, LLC, an affiliate of Atlantic Health System. This year's deputy grand marshal of the annual West Orange St. Patrick's Day Parade.







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## 34. Ronald G. Nahass, MD

*Infectious Disease, Internal Medicine*

A pioneering New Jersey doctor in state-of-the-art treatments for HIV, Hepatitis B and C, as well as other complex infectious diseases. Named to the National Guideline Panel for new therapies in Hepatitis C. Prime driver of a network of over 40 nationally-recognized infectious disease specialists across nine practices and 130 locations throughout New Jersey.



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## 35. Al Maghazehe

*CEO, Capital Health Systems*

Named president and CEO of Capital Health in 1998, Maghazehe joined what was then Helene Fuld Medical Center (now Capital Health Regional Medical Center) in 1979, where he began his professional career as a graduate school intern and progressed to Chief Executive Officer.



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## 36. Deborah Visconi

*President and CEO, Bergen New Bridge Medical Center*

At the helm of New Bridge, Visconi heads both the largest hospital and licensed nursing home in New Jersey. A 30-year-plus veteran of the healthcare industry.





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## 37. Gary D. St. Hillaire

*CEO, Horizon*

Also serves as chair of the National Institute for Health Care Management (NIHCM) and the NIHCM Foundation, and on the boards of directors of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association and of America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP), BCS Financial, Ernest Health, and the New Jersey Performing Arts Center.



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## 38. Mike Munoz

*SVP and Market President of AmeriHealth*

Munoz oversees profit-and-loss management and business operations for the AmeriHealth health plan.



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## 39. Paul Martin

*CEO Martin Healthcare Advisors*

In 1989, with an MPT in Physical Therapy, Martin and two partners founded their own outpatient rehab company. They grew the firm to 21 clinics and sold it to a large acquirer.



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## 40. Rick Rispoli

*Sales VP at AETNA*

With exhaustive experience in the field, Rispoli cut his industry teeth at Horizon BCBSNJ.



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## 41. Karen Davis-Farage

*Chair, Alzheimer's New Jersey*

Dedicated to improving quality of life for patients, Alzheimer's New Jersey is the first line of support for over 600,000 New Jersey residents impacted by Alzheimer's disease and other dementias by providing programs and partnerships that increase awareness and access to services.



## 42. Tanesha Owens

*President and Founder of All About You Healthcare Advocates*

A board-certified Nurse Practitioner and Patient Advocate, Owens addresses health disparities that disproportionately affect individuals with limited resources and lack of health literacy.



## 43. Todd Wolfson

*National President of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and president of Rutgers AAUP-AFT*

Associate professor in the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Rutgers University, Wolfson this year found himself on the front lines of the Trump Administration's attack on research funding for Rutgers University. Said Wolfson, "Cancer patients will be left without hope. Alzheimer's will steal more loved ones, Diabetes going untreated and heart disease taking lives that could have been saved," said Wolfson. "It means students training to save lives will have their futures stripped away before they even begin.... all because billionaires decide their profits mean more than lives. Let me be clear. Trump's reckless cuts will kill. This isn't about streamlining government or reducing waste. This is about consolidating power at the expense of working people. ...These are the actions of cruel weak people."





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## 44. Andrew Aronson

*President and CEO, Healthcare Association of New Jersey*

Aronson is one of the state's leading advocates for New Jersey's disabled and elderly community.



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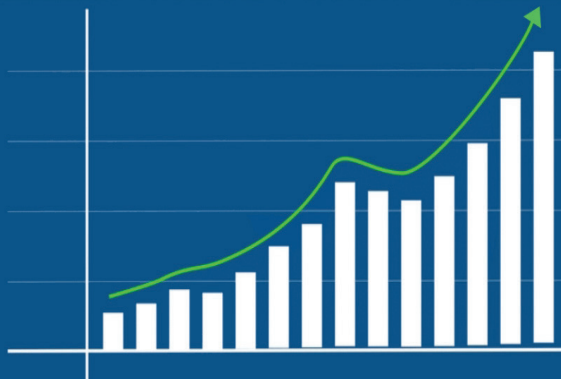
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## 45. Harold Garwin

*Board of Trustees Board Chair, Mental Health Association in New Jersey (MHANJ)*

A statewide non-profit organization, MHANJ strives for children and adults to achieve victory over mental illness and substance use disorders through advocacy, education, training and services.

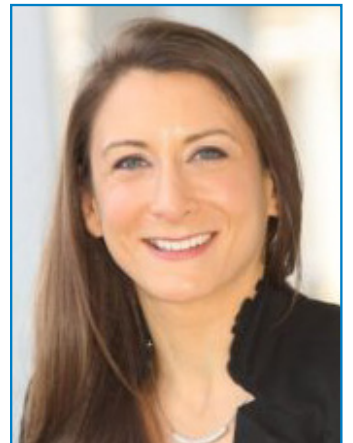


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## 46. Chrissy Buteas

*President and CEO, HealthCare Institute of New Jersey*

Veteran insider, senior leader in the fields of public policy, government affairs, and fundraising.



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## 47. Randy Minnietar

*Partner, Mercury Public Affairs*

Recognized as one of the state's top healthcare public affairs executives, Minnietar serves as the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Preferred Behavior Health Group (PBHG).



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## 48. Jeanne Otersen

*Chief-of-Staff, Health Professionals & Allied Employees (HPAE)*

Tireless advocate for New Jersey's nurses and health care professionals, dedicated to improving health and safety at all workplaces.



---

## 49. Raymond Castro

*New Jersey Policy Perspective*

Formerly the Director of Health Policy for NJPP, Castro has expert policy expertise in healthcare areas that include the Affordable Care Act, universal health coverage, NJ FamilyCare, health care transformation, poverty, the social safety net, public assistance and working family tax credits.



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## 50. Deborah Hartel

*Deputy Commissioner, Integrated Health for the State of NJ*

Heads the branch of the New Jersey Department of Health comprised of the four state psychiatric hospitals under the Division of Behavioral Health Services, the Division of Community Health Services and the Office of Long-Term Care Resiliency.

