

NEW JERSEY

Kaitlan Baston, MD, MSC, DFASAM

Acting Health Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Health



Prior to becoming New Jersey's Acting Health

Commissioner, Dr. Baston built and led the Cooper Center for Healing, an integrated pain, addiction, and behavioral health center and was an Associate Professor of Medicine at Cooper Medical school of Rowan University.

Dr. Baston began her career as a full spectrum family physician focused on underserved populations. Prior to coming to New Jersey, her work ranged from public health projects in Rwanda, to public maternity and trauma hospitals in the Dominican Republic, to providing full spectrum family planning services and working in a bilingual community health center in Seattle, Washington.



Her experiences in primary care highlighted that both patients and medical professionals suffer from the lack of addiction medicine training and integration into healthcare. Following her addiction medicine fellowship, she came to Camden in 2015 driven to improve community-centered health care delivery, population health, and behavioral health. In the following seven years she built an inpatient addiction consult service, multiple interdisciplinary outpatient clinics, a wrap-around perinatal substance use disorder program, a harm reduction based low-barrier walk-in clinic, and the first program for emergency medicine services (EMS) field initiation of medication for addiction treatment. She led both undergraduate and graduate addiction medical education and started a new addiction medicine fellowship. Her research team was responsible for bringing in and overseeing several million dollars in state and federal grant funding to support innovation, community-based care, and to address social determinants of health.

Member Bio

This work expanded to state and federal level health policy, and Dr. Baston became the Medical Director of Government Relations at Cooper University Health Care in 2019. She is nationally recognized for her work in perinatal substance use disorders and EMS delivery of addiction treatment. She has spoken to congress, the American Bar Association, and is a national educator for the organization Zero to Three. She has served on national level committees including the Infant Toddler Court Program Expert Advisory Group, the American Academy of Pediatrics Head Start National Expert Workgroup, the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives Opioid Task Force, and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health Opioid Collaborative Workgroup. She has also served on the New Jersey DMHAS State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup, the New Jersey ATLAS State Advisory Committee, the Camden County Addiction Awareness Task Force, and the Camden County Opioid Settlement Funds Board. In 2011, she was awarded the Savacool Prize in Medical Ethics. She has been recognized as a New Jersey Top Doctor or Top Female Doctor every year from 2017 to 2023, won the Golden Apple Teaching Award in 2021, the New Jersey Healthcare Innovation Hero award in 2022, and the New Jersey Hospital Association Healthy New Jersey Award in 2023.

Currently, Dr. Baston is focused on decreasing health disparities, improving maternal child health outcomes, and enhancing integrated care for behavioral health and substance use disorders. In her role as Health Commissioner, she strives to ensure that all people have access to resources that can keep them healthy and to compassionate, evidence-based medical care when needed. Dr. Baston is proud to work with an interdisciplinary team of like-minded, driven individuals at the Department of Health who are dedicated to improving the equity and health of New Jersey.

