



**NEW
JERSEY**
Coalition for
Addiction
Recovery
Support

7TH ANNUAL

RECOVERY ECOSYSTEMS CONFERENCE

*From Evidence to Action: Building a
Stronger Recovery Ecosystem*

March 5, 2026



*in partnership with the Department of
Social Work and Public Administration*



Coalition for
Addiction
Recovery
Support



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SAMHSA
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The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.

NEW JERSEY HUMAN SERVICES



The Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) serves as the Single State Agency (SSA) for Substance Use and the State Mental Health Authority (SMHA) as designated by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The Division oversees New Jersey's adult system of community-based behavioral health services.

These agencies provide a full array of services, including substance use prevention and early intervention, emergency screening, outpatient and intensive outpatient mental health and addiction services, partial care and partial hospitalization, case management, medication-assisted treatment for substance use, and long and short term mental health and substance use residential services, in addition to other evidence-based practices such as the Program for Assertive Community Treatment (PACT), supported employment and education, and supportive housing.

Welcome to the 7th Annual NJ-CARS Recovery Ecosystems Conference

Over the past seven years, the continued evolution of RECO has reflected the strength, resilience, and leadership of New Jersey's recovery community. What began as a shared vision has grown into a dynamic, statewide gathering shaped by the expertise and commitment of recovery support providers from every corner of our twenty-one counties.

This year's conference program highlights the innovation happening across our ecosystem — designed and delivered by professionals, advocates, and individuals with lived experience who are advancing recovery every day. NJ-CARS is honored to convene this space for learning, collaboration, and collective progress.

We are deeply grateful to our presenters, sponsors, exhibitors, attendees, and the dedicated team who make this event possible. Your investment of time, energy, and leadership strengthens not only this conference, but the broader recovery movement across New Jersey.

Our hope is that today fuels new partnerships, sparks bold ideas, and reinforces our shared commitment to expanding and enhancing recovery support services statewide.

In Service,



Morgan Thompson, MSW (she/her)
Prevention Links, CEO



Mariel Hufnagel, MPA, CNP, CPRS (she/her)
NJ-CARS Conference Coordinator



Welcome to the 7th Annual Recovery Ecosystem Conference!

As NJ-CARS Co-Chairs, we are continually inspired by the strength and dedication of our more than 1,000 members. The relationships built through this network are the foundation of meaningful systems change, and it is that spirit of connection that brings us together today.

This conference represents the collective energy of providers, advocates, community leaders, and individuals in recovery who are working every day to strengthen New Jersey's recovery landscape. Your presence here reflects a shared belief that collaboration drives impact.

We hope today offers space to deepen partnerships, explore new ideas, and celebrate the progress we are making together. Our agenda has been thoughtfully developed to reflect the diversity and depth of our recovery ecosystem, and we encourage you to fully engage, connect, and contribute.

We are grateful you are here and excited for the continued growth of NJ-CARS and the work ahead.

With gratitude,



Cindymarie Dix

Cindymarie Dix (she/her)
NJ-CARS Co-Chair



Stephani Register

Stephani Register (she/her)
NJ-CARS Co-Chair

Agenda

8:30am-
9:30am

REGISTRATION & BREAKFAST

9:30am-
11:00am

OPENING REMARKS & MORNING KEYNOTE

Auditorium

- Morgan Thompson, MSW (she/her)
Prevention Links, Chief Executive Officer
- Mary Landriau, MSW, LCSW (she/her)
SHU, Director of the BSW Practicum, Senior Faculty Associate
- Mariel Hufnagel, MPA, CNP, CPRS (she/her)
Recovery Ecosystems Conference Coordinator

Building Holistic Recovery Capital – From Peer Support to System Transformation – Dr. David Best (he/him)

11:15am-
12:15pm

Breakout Session I

Jubilee Hall (See Whova App for Details)

12:15pm-
1:15pm

Lunch - University Center Cafeteria

1:30pm-
2:30pm

Breakout Session II

Jubilee Hall (See Whova App for Details)

2:45pm-
3:30pm

AFTERNOON KEYNOTE

Jubilee Hall Auditorium

The Changing Approach to Addiction and Impact on Racial Health Equity: From Incarceration, to Clinic, to Community – Dr. Corrie Vilsaint (she/her)

3:30pm-
4:15pm

AWARD CEREMONY & CLOSING REMARKS

Jubilee Hall Auditorium

- Cindymarie Dix (she/her) – NJ-CARS Co-Chair
- **Awardees:**
 - Rising Leader Award: Ruby Clark (she/her)
 - Power of Partnership Award: Christina Fagan (she/her)
 - Selfless Service Award: Jenna Reidy (she/her)
 - Transformative Leader: Suzanne Borys (she/her)

Closing Remarks

- Stephani Register (she/her) – NJ-CARS Co-Chair, CEO and Founder of Recovery Is Essential
- Mariel Hufnagel, MPA, CNP, CPRS (she/her) – Recovery Ecosystems Conference Coordinator

PROFESSIONAL HEADSHOTS - JUBILEE HALL ATRIUM

8:30am - 9:30am | 12pm - 1:30pm | 4:15pm-5pm

From Evidence to Action: Building a Stronger Recovery Ecosystem

Since its inception, RECO has served as a unifying space where lived experience meets research, and where collaboration fuels progress. This year's focus reflects a collective shift from understanding what works to actively applying it—turning evidence, best practices, and recovery science into meaningful, community-driven action. By centering implementation, partnership, and accountability, the conference highlights how recovery ecosystems can be strengthened through coordinated efforts across systems, sectors, and communities, driving real and lasting change throughout New Jersey.

Keynote Speakers



Building Holistic Recovery Capital – From Peer Support to System Transformation

Presenter: Dr. David Best (he/him)

This keynote explores the global evidence base for recovery capital and how peer support, community connection, and system-level collaboration drive long-term recovery outcomes. Dr. Best examines how recovery capital can be intentionally built across individuals, organizations, and communities to strengthen recovery ecosystems, advance health equity, and translate evidence into sustainable, real-world action.



The Changing Approach to Addiction and Impact on Racial Health Equity: From Incarceration, to Clinic, to Community

Presenter: Dr. Corrie Vilsaint (she/her)

Much has been learned about the emergence, clinical course, and resolution of substance use disorders, contributing to significant shifts in our approach to addiction. An urgent public health challenge, however, is the widening of health disparities. In the U.S., Black and Latinx people are about half as likely to remit compared to their White counterparts. This presentation will describe how important paradigm shifts have shaped racial health disparities as well as factors that have been shown to accelerate the time to stable remission. Implications for building effective public health infrastructure to equitably address substance use disorders will be the focus of this discussion.

8TH ANNUAL

RECOVERY ECOSYSTEMS CONFERENCE

SAVE THE DATE

Thursday, March 4th 2027



Subscribe for
updates!

Want to join the *RECO2027* Conference Committee?
Let us know at info@nj-cars.org



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Explore our work in recovery advocacy, peer support, and recovery leadership at: facesandvoicesofrecovery.org



At Faces & Voices of Recovery, we believe that recovery is not just a possibility- it's a movement. As proud sponsors of the 7th Annual Recovery Ecosystems Conference, we're honored to stand alongside passionate changemakers, youth advocates, and recovery champions who are redefining what it means to heal, grow, and lead. From local grassroots efforts to shaping national policy, Faces & Voices of Recovery raises public awareness and educates policymakers about the need for peer-centered recovery solutions across the country. We work every day to protect recovery rights, eliminate stigma and support the many pathways of recovery.

Join the movement.

Follow us. Share your story. Stand up for recovery.



#facesandvoices #advocate4recovery #RecoveryCommunity #addictionrecovery

@FacesAndVoicesOfRecovery



From hospital-based crisis services and mobile outreach to residential and outpatient treatment, Integrity House provides care addressing substance use, mental health, physical health, and the social factors that shape recovery.

Through this integrated approach, we help reduce barriers to care, strengthen engagement in services, and improve long-term health and wellness outcomes for individuals and families.

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Integrity House is a 501(c)(3) organization with an EIN of 22-1894706.

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BEHAVE HEALTH

At BehaveHealth, our mission is to empower providers across the continuum of care—helping them deliver exceptional services while building sustainable, values-driven organizations.

We're proud to sponsor and support this conference and the broader work of strengthening behavioral health and addiction treatment services nationwide.

BehaveHealth offers an industry-leading software platform purpose-built for behavioral health and addiction treatment providers, from peer support and recovery residences to detox, residential, and outpatient care. Our solutions simplify operations, strengthen compliance, and enable outcomes-driven growth with confidence.

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