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May 29, 2020

Judith M. Persichilli, RN
Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Health
P. O. Box 360, Trenton, NJ 08625-0360

Dear Ms. Persichilli:

As you are aware, New Jersey has suffered an unconscionable number of deaths during this COVID-19 pandemic. Governor Murphy has called this moment New Jersey's "greatest hour of need in the history of our state." This crisis has required an all-hands-on-deck response from our government to limit the pain and suffering among New Jerseyans.

On May 28, the New Jersey Globe published an article that brings to light the fact that your Assistant Commissioner in the New Jersey Department of Health (DOH), Mr. Christopher Neuwirth (\$127,386-per-year salary), also had a concurrent position as a senior associate with Margolis Healy & Associates, a national emergency management consulting firm. According to the article, Mr. Neuwirth did not disclose this information on his financial disclosure statement. Further, Mr. Neuwirth is also the owner of Emergency Manager Project LLC, which operates a business that is regulated by the very office he ran.

According to his DOH biography, Mr. Neuwirth was responsible for Public Health Infrastructure, Laboratories & Emergency Preparedness. Mr. Neuwirth was "providing strategic and operational leadership to coordinate New Jersey's hospital and public health disaster resilience...". In other words, as this pandemic pushed New Jersey's healthcare infrastructure past the brink of capacity, the person we had in charge was pre-occupied with two other private business interests. I have attached a tweet posted by Margolis Healy & Associates which promotes their "colleague" as Mr. Neuwirth testified in front of the House of Representatives Homeland Security Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response and Recovery, on behalf of the DOH. I would be appalled that the DOH would know about this arrangement and not take immediate action.

In light of this disturbing revelation, I have the following questions:

- 1) When did you first become aware of Mr. Neuwirth's senior associate position at Margolis Healy & Associates?
- 2) When did you first become aware of Mr. Neuwirth's ownership stake in a private business (Emergency Manager Project LLC), which is regulated by the Department of Health?
- 3) When did the DOH Ethics Officer become aware of these two private business interests?
- 4) On what basis did you and the DOH Ethics Officer determine there was no conflict of interest between Mr. Neuwirth's DOH employment and his two private business interests?
- 5) How is it that you could employ an Assistant Commissioner with two private business interests on the side, involving activity that the Department of Health itself should be regulating?
- 6) Will the DOH be conducting a review of any contracts awarded that Mr. Neuwirth was involved in to ensure those contracts were not awarded to clients of Margolis Healy & Associates?
- 7) Will the DOH be conducting a review of all meetings Mr. Neuwirth was in with outside groups where the DOH took action to ensure that no clients of Margolis Healy & Associates benefited from said action?

Merely stating that Mr. Neuwirth is no longer an employee of the Department is insufficient. It is my expectation that a thorough review by your office will be conducted and detailed responses to my above questions will be provided. Should you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me. A hard copy of this email will follow.

Sincerely,



Assemblyman Christopher P. DePhillips
40th Legislative District

Be sure to catch our colleague
Christopher Neuwirth discuss
Coronavirus Preparedness and
Response to the Committee in
Homeland Security tomorrow. [ow.ly/
Ejsz30qqoyMA](https://ow.ly/Ejsz30qqoyMA)

