

**Opening Remarks Presented to the  
Assembly Budget Committee  
by  
Jennifer Velez, Commissioner  
New Jersey Department of Human Services  
April 8, 2008**

- Good morning Chairman Greenwald and distinguished members of the Committee.
- I'm pleased to be before you today to discuss the Medicaid program – and in particular – our efforts to eliminate or reduce waste, fraud and abuse.
- Our Medicaid program spends approximately \$10 billion a year – State and federal dollars combined – nearly two-thirds of which is incurred by the Department of Human Services.
- That magnitude of spending requires us to ensure that every public dollar is spent judiciously and with the highest level of integrity.
- Auditing, implementing best practices, investigating, data matches and mining – all are examples of the kinds of tools that we have to ensure – as best we're able – that our public programs and services are reaching those for whom they are intended.
- We also work collaboratively with other State agencies, look to other states for their ideas, and we work with the federal government.
- With that as a backdrop, I want to acknowledge that the most recent State Auditor reports, which described deficiencies in some of our eligibility and procurement procedures, provide for us an opportunity to redress and reevaluate certain of our internal controls.
- The transparency that auditing provides is of paramount importance – and I believe it is consistent with Governor Corzine's commitment to smart fiscal planning and accountability.
- And while I am pleased to report that some of the Auditor's recommendations were already underway – I welcome an opportunity to discuss these reports with you further.
- There is no question about the value of his recommendations, and the additional value that the Medicaid Inspector General will add to the continued pursuit of the prevention of waste, fraud and abuse of taxpayer dollars.
- And we will hold accountable those who choose to ignore the law and pursue fraudulent practices at the expense of the public's money. As such, I have forwarded to the Attorney General the areas identified by the State Auditor's report for her review and appropriate action.
- I want to state publicly my very firm commitment to ensure that the State's money is indeed spent appropriately.
- With that, I welcome your questions. Thank you.