

Donna Cohen Ross

Donna Cohen Ross is a mission-driven policy expert, dedicated to improving the health and well-being of low-income families and individuals. With a focus on reducing poverty, she works with clients on projects that make the critical link between health and school readiness, food security, income security and other pressing concerns for low-income families and communities. Her clients include national nonprofit organizations with state and local networks, private foundations, government agencies, health care providers, community-based groups and others.

Donna knows how to shape policy and put it into action. Her expertise spans a variety of wide variety of programs including Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, the Earned Income Tax Credit, food assistance programs and other public benefits. She produces creative, high-impact outreach campaigns that achieve immediate and sustainable results, and skillfully engages diverse stakeholders to build meaningful partnerships. Her tactical guides and consumer-oriented tools are used by states, health care providers, community organizations, school districts and others nationwide. A dynamic communicator, Donna delivers training programs for diverse audiences and is a featured speaker at state and national conferences.

As a senior policy advisor and the director of enrollment initiatives at the CMS Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services (CMCS), Donna advanced new Medicaid and CHIP enrollment policies under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and the CHIP Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA). A tireless advocate for simplifying access for eligible individuals, Donna designed and helped implement guidance for states on strategies to jump-start Medicaid enrollment using Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) data. As a result, hundreds of thousands of adults and children in six states gained health coverage in the first year of implementation, and additional states have since begun employing these effective enrollment methods. Donna also developed and led the national Connecting Kids to Coverage Campaign, which has played an important role in boosting Medicaid and CHIP participation rates and reducing the percentage of uninsured children and teens nationwide.

Prior to her federal service, Donna directed the outreach division at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities in Washington, D.C. where she promoted policies to modernize Medicaid and CHIP and to advance financial security for low-income families through refundable tax credits like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), one of the nation's most effective anti-poverty tools.

Donna's early work at the Association for Children of New Jersey, the Community Food Bank of New Jersey, and the Newark Preschool Council helped improve nutrition services for children and families. She implemented a foundation-supported WIC Quality Enhancement Grant Program, and led a successful statewide effort to create a School Breakfast Start-Up Fund that made nutritious meals available in a dozen of New Jersey's poorest school districts. At New Jersey's largest

Head Start program, Donna managed the USDA's Child Care Food Program and delivered award-winning nutrition education programs for children, parents and staff. During this time, Donna was appointed by Governor Thomas Kean to serve on the New Jersey Commission on Hunger.