

# Centering Healthcare Institute and the Burke Foundation Launch Initiative to Improve Maternal and Child Health in N.J.

*Expanding access to transformative Centering group care model will improve birth, maternal health and pediatric outcomes, address racial health disparities*

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY, UNITED STATES , April 15, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Centering Healthcare Institute](#) (CHI) and [the Burke Foundation](#) have announced the launch of a statewide initiative to improve maternal, infant and child health outcomes, with a particular focus on reducing health disparities among under-resourced populations and communities of color. Through the initiative, the Burke Foundation will fund implementation of CenteringPregnancy® and CenteringParenting® models at up to 50 healthcare practices over the next five years.

A billable healthcare visit, Centering brings patients out of the exam room and into a group setting where they learn from their providers and each other. In each two-hour visit, there is ample time for health assessment, interactive learning and community building. Visits meet nationally recognized clinical standards and are facilitated by a credentialed healthcare provider. Patients receive high quality care and as part of an ongoing group, form a supportive community where they develop skills and confidence to take control of the health of their children and themselves. By expanding access to the Centering models of group care, the initiative seeks to bring relationship-based care, grounded in evidence, to more families and regions in New Jersey and effectively support the prenatal-to-three system of care.

“This partnership is a long-term investment in improving health outcomes and self-activation for generations of New Jerseyans, allowing families and communities to thrive for decades to come,” said Angie Truesdale, Chief Executive Officer at CHI. “Centering offers the unique opportunity for continuity of care for families from pregnancy through the critical early years, and we expect this initiative in New Jersey to be held up as a successful model for all states to improve their maternal and child health outcomes.”

During the first year, a total of [10 implementation grants](#) will help clinical practices establish Centering care in counties reporting poor health outcomes and greater health disparities. These awards will cover in-kind services including two years of implementation support, training, technical assistance and materials from CHI. In addition, mini grants of up to \$10,000 will be offered to help cover operational expenses.

“It will take a collaborative effort at multiple levels with both state and private investments to address these disparities and improve outcomes for infants, parents and families,” said Atiya Weiss, Executive Director of The Burke Foundation. “We are proud to be part of the movement to help make New Jersey families healthier and more resilient. We support Centering because we believe this relationship-based model uniquely incorporates peer learning, community building, and social support into the system of care to strengthen outcomes for expectant moms, babies and families.”

CenteringPregnancy, CHI’s flagship model, is a nationally recognized model of group prenatal care known to nearly eliminate the disparities in preterm birth rates between Black and White birthing individuals. Healthcare practices interested in starting CenteringPregnancy groups may apply for one of five implementation awards by completing the Request for Application by April 30, 2021. Promising applicants not selected may be considered for the second round of funding.

“The Centering model for group healthcare can provide a significant impact in underserved communities of color,” said Felicia Taylor, CEO of New Jersey Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics. “We applaud the efforts of Centering Healthcare Institute and the Burke Foundation for their commitment to addressing continuity of care and resiliency for mothers and babies in some of the most vulnerable populations throughout the state of New Jersey.”

Increasing access to the CenteringPregnancy model is highlighted as a sustainable strategy in the Nurture NJ 2021 Strategic Plan, a statewide effort led by First Lady Tammy Murphy, to improve outcomes and promote birth equity. The state also passed legislation in 2019 to expand its Medicaid program to cover and provide enhanced reimbursement for CenteringPregnancy services. To date, 20 Centering sites operate in New Jersey, including five sites implemented as part of the state Department of Health’s Healthy Women, Healthy Families program.

As part of the CHI-Burke Centering expansion initiative, a separate RFA for sites wishing to launch CenteringParenting, CHI’s pediatric group care model, was also released. Four healthcare sites recently were selected as part of the inaugural cohort to receive the awards, with a fifth pending confirmation, among those counties with greater child health disparities based on an analysis of pediatric outcomes:

- Jane H. Booker Family Health Center, Neptune, NJ
- AtlanticCare Health Services, Atlantic City, NJ
- Foundation Pediatrics, East Orange, NJ
- University Hospital Department of Pediatrics, Newark, NJ

Despite being one of the wealthiest states in terms of per capita income, New Jersey ranks among the worst U.S. states for maternal mortality – 47th out of the 50 states – and continues to grapple with some of the worst pregnancy, birth and infant health outcomes. For women and babies of color, the statistics are even more dire. A Black mother in New Jersey is seven times more likely to die than a white mother due to pregnancy-related complications and a Black baby

is three times more likely to die than a white baby in their first year of life, a troubling disparity trend that has persisted for years.

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