

Trenton Health Team & Central Jersey Family Health Consortium Bring Nurse Home Visits to Families in Mercer County

First Lady Tammy Murphy Applauds Program for Parents of Newborns

TRENTON, NEW JERSEY, UNITED STATES, April 21, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Trenton Health Team](#) (THT) is partnering with Central Jersey Family Health Consortium, Capital Health, and Family Connects International® to provide free at-home nurse visits for parents who live in Mercer County and give birth at Capital Health -- approximately 2,000 families per year, thanks to support from [The Burke Foundation](#) and the New Jersey Department of Children and Families.

The Family Connects pilot program aligns with the recommendations laid out by the [Nurture NJ Strategic Plan](#), an initiative of First Lady Tammy Murphy. Specifically, recommendation 5.19 calls on the Department of Children and Families to expand evidence-based home visiting programs.

“The vision of the Nurture NJ Maternal and Infant Health Strategic Plan is to create an environment where all women have the opportunity to be healthy, and expanding the support provided after childbirth through evidence-based home visiting is critical to our mission,” said First Lady Tammy Murphy. “Built through the incredible partnership of The Burke Foundation, Trenton Health Team, Central Jersey Family Health Consortium, Capital Health, Family Connects International and the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, this pilot across Mercer County brings us one step closer to making New Jersey the safest, most equitable place in the nation to deliver and raise a baby.”

Two-thirds of infant deaths occur within 28 days of birth, according to THT’s 2019 Community Health Needs and Assets report. In Mercer County, the infant mortality rate is 7.0 infant deaths per 1,000 live births—exceeding both state and national rates (4.1 and 5.9).

“The Burke Foundation is honored to be a part of this powerful public-private partnership in launching a new model of care to support newborns and families and strengthen the home visiting system,” said Atiya Weiss, Executive Director of the Burke Foundation. “This first-of-its-kind initiative in New Jersey will connect parents of newborns in Mercer County to the community resources and health care information they need, regardless of socio-economic status.”

The Family Connects program – the first of its kind in New Jersey – builds on THT’s ongoing

efforts to improve maternal and child health outcomes, including convening a group of area stakeholders to address challenges and opportunities in a coordinated, comprehensive manner.

“Every parent of a newborn has questions and we believe a nurse’s home visit will help identify and address any concerns,” said Emily Baggett, THT Senior Director of Policy and Strategy. “THT is excited and proud to work with CJFHC to support parents, families and babies across Mercer County.”

Family Connects International, based in Durham, NC, supports sites implementing the evidence-based model, which currently exists in more than a dozen states. The model, which will launch via telehealth visits, includes a clinical and social assessment performed during the 90+ minute visit that takes place within three weeks after delivery, along with referrals to appropriate services, such as pediatric care, lactation support, behavioral health services, nutrition resources, and more. Every Family Connects program collaborates with agencies across the community, ensuring that resources offered to families are current and identifying any gaps in needed services.

“Nurse home visiting programs can be an incredible resource for parents of newborns: aiding in postpartum recovery, strengthening parent-child bonds, and providing parents with the information and resources they need to feel confident in welcoming a new baby by modeling positive practices for new and growing families,” said DCF Commissioner Christine Norbut Beyer. “We’re thrilled to be a partner in this pilot and eager to see the beneficial impact it has in keeping families in Mercer County safe, healthy and connected.”

Rigorous studies of the Family Connects model have found that infants experienced 50% fewer emergency room and hospital stays; mothers were 28% less likely to report possible clinical anxiety; mothers reported significantly more positive parenting behaviors; home environments and home safety were improved; and families experienced enhanced connections to community resources.

In 2020, THT began the planning and site preparation activities needed to launch a Family Connects pilot program for Capital Health patients with newborn infants who choose to participate, regardless of income or socioeconomic status. The model is designed to support the health and well-being of all newborns and their families within a given community by offering them 1-3 home visits by a highly trained registered nurse and linking them to community resources that meet their individual needs and preferences.

Having nearly 30 years’ experience in providing programs and services to childbearing families, Central Jersey Family Health Consortium (CJFHC), whose mission is to promote an equitable and healthy future for families through services, advocacy, education and collaboration, will continue to make families stronger with the implementation of Family Connects.

“We are incredibly excited to bring to Mercer County a program that has been proven to improve the lives of families with a newborn by connecting them to a continuum of community-based resources and programs including postpartum home visits” says Robyn D'Oria, CEO of CJFHC.

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