

Burke Foundation and NJAAP Launch Alliance to Promote Maternal Health and Child Development

EAST WINDSOR, NEW JERSEY, UNITED STATES, January 5, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The New Jersey Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (NJAAP) announced a partnership with the Burke Foundation to launch the New Jersey Centering Alliance to Transform Healthcare to support expansion of Centering, an innovative group-based approach to delivering prenatal and pediatric healthcare, to 50 new sites by 2026.

Though it is among the wealthiest states, New Jersey has the fourth highest maternal mortality in the US and among the worst pregnancy, birth, and infant health outcomes in the country. The situation is especially dire among communities of color.

[Centering is one way to change that.](#) Among the most effective interventions to improve maternal and child health and reduce health disparities, Centering is associated with such outcomes as fewer preterm births and low birthweight babies plus higher rates of breastfeeding, child immunizations, and well-visit attendance.

Using relationship-based group healthcare for pregnant women and families with newborns, Centering strives to achieve the "[Quadruple Aim](#)" of better health, lower costs, less burnout among providers, and a more positive care experience for families. [Research found](#) disparities in preterm births among Black mothers relative to white and Hispanic mothers were almost eliminated for Centering participants.

The Burke Foundation awarded NJAAP \$125,000 to launch the New Jersey Centering Alliance to advance three goals: (1) build a community of practice among all Centering sites; (2) grow the number of Centering sites to improve maternal and child health; and (3) bolster the model's sustainability, from better payment models to enhancing awareness and buy-in among providers and patients. An advisory group of 21 leaders – including family advocates, nonprofit leaders, state officials, community doulas, clinicians, and public health professionals – will provide strategic advice, ideas, and support.

"The Centering model of care creates a unique opportunity to empower families to take control of their health," said Felicia K. Taylor, Chief Executive Officer at NJAAP. "The New Jersey Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics is pleased to participate in efforts to engage with our partners at the Burke Foundation and in the community to help increase awareness and scale up

CenteringPregnancy and CenteringParenting models of care throughout the state.”

“Last year, the Burke Foundation launched a five-year strategic plan focusing on the First 1,000 Days – from pregnancy through a child’s second birthday,” said Burke’s executive director, Atiya Weiss. “This is the optimal time to go upstream and tackle the stark racial disparities in maternal and infant health for Black and Brown families. Centering is a unique approach to help families thrive and build community for lifelong health.”

The grant to NJAAP builds on the Burke Foundation’s financial support of Centering Healthcare Institute to expand the Centering network within the state and provide training and technical assistance, the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute to explore more robust financing strategies, and the Rutgers School Public Health to conduct an evaluation.

Today, New Jersey has 23 CenteringPregnancy and 5 CenteringParenting sites. The Burke Foundation estimates the 50-site expansion will reach about 7,300 pregnant women and 5,100 babies a year in areas of highest need.

The New Jersey Centering Alliance Advisory Group members are:

Arielle Elias, CNM, NP -- Certified Nurse Midwife and women’s health nurse practitioner, Ocean Health Initiatives

Carl Boyd -- co-chair, Camden County Council for Young Children and member, CPAC Community Advisory Council, Center for Family Services

Cherriee Battle -- community researcher, Greater Newark Health Care Coalition and a former participant of CenteringPregnancy

Damali Campbell, MD -- associate professor, Rutgers-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and OB/GYN, University Hospital

Deepa Srinivasavaradan -- director of early childhood initiatives, SPAN Parent Advocacy Network

Diane Dellanno, LCSW -- policy analyst, Advocates for Children of New Jersey

Ediza Lahoz Valentino, MSW, LSW -- HealthySteps specialist, Jane H. Booker Family Center, Hackensack Meridian Health

Erika Dickerson, MSW, LSW -- Early Childhood Comprehensive System/Help Me Grow manager, New Jersey Department of Children and Families

Jaye Wilson, LPN -- founder and president, Melinated Moms

Keri Logosso-Misurell, JD -- executive director, Greater Newark Health Care Coalition

Lisa D'Amico, RNC, MSN, APN-C: -- public health consultant 2 nursing, New Jersey Department of Health

Marie Kinsella, MS, MCHES -- director of community programs, Partnership for Maternal and Child Health of Northern New Jersey

Monica Lallo, EdD, MPM, MPA -- senior vice president of prevention, Youth, and Education Services, Acenda Integrated Health

Natasha Dravid, MBA -- senior director, Care Management and Redesign Initiatives, Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers

Noelle Abbott -- program specialist trainee, New Jersey Department of Health

Pamela Tew, LSW -- senior policy analyst - New Jersey, HealthySteps National Office at Zero to Three

Robyn D'Oria, MA, RNC, APN -- chief executive officer, Central Jersey Family Health Consortium

Roger Kierce, MD -- chair, Department of OB/GYN, St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center

Shilpa Pai, MD, FAAP -- associate professor, Rutgers-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and pediatrician, Eric. B. Chandler Health Center

Taru Sinha, MD, FAAFP -- director of women's health, VNA of Central Jersey, Freehold Family Health Center

Tonique Griffin -- full spectrum community doula

Wendy Morriarty, MPH -- vice president, Medicaid and chief Medicaid officer, Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey

"The Centering team has embraced the community and the community has embraced us," said Roger Kierce, MD, Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center in Paterson. "True trust is being built, women's voices are being heard and respected, and the outcomes have been fantastic."

"CenteringParenting not only provides a holistic approach to caring for a child, but also to their family," said Shilpa Pai, MD, associate professor at Rutgers-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and pediatrician at the Eric. B. Chandler Health Center. "It builds connections between parents,

children, healthcare providers -- fostering and building strong and resilient communities. It's a way of delivering pediatric healthcare that should be available more widely in New Jersey."

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