

Governor Chris Christie Continues to Protect Most Vulnerable with \$12 Million in Funding for Life Saving Early Cancer Detection Program

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Visits with Former and Current Patients at Hunterdon Regional Cancer Center

Trenton, NJ – Acting on his commitment to provide state funding for services and programs to assist the most vulnerable New Jerseyans, Governor Chris Christie and Health Commissioner Mary E. O'Dowd today visited the Hunterdon Regional Cancer Center in Flemington to announce \$12 million in funding for New Jersey Cancer Education and Early Detection program (NJCEED) in his Fiscal Year 2013 Budget. The Hunterdon center provides uninsured and low-income New Jerseyans with access to lifesaving free cancer screenings under the NJCEED program.

This funding increase continues and strengthens the Christie Administration's commitment to the delivery of lifesaving care provided at the state's 21 NJCEED agencies that collectively serve tens of thousands of women, children, families and low-income New Jerseyans every year. By increasing state funding sources for NJCEED programs by \$3.5 million this year, the Christie Administration has brought total combined state and federal funding for the program this year to \$12 million.

"There probably isn't a family in our state, including mine, that has not been affected by the physical and emotional pain that comes with being diagnosed with cancer," said Governor Christie. "For someone who is uninsured or under-insured, that burden is even greater. That's why I have made it a priority in my budget this year to protect funding for NJCEED and the life-saving services it provides to our most vulnerable residents."

More than 121,000 low-income residents throughout the state have received cancer screenings through the NJCEED program since it began nearly 20 years ago. More than 1,900 cancer cases have been diagnosed since 1993. Last year, the program provided 32,000 screenings to nearly 22,000 people statewide.

NJCEED provides free, comprehensive screening services in all counties for breast, cervical, prostate, and colorectal cancer to residents with incomes that do not exceed 250 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. In 2012, 250 percent of the Federal Poverty Level is \$57,625 for a family of four.

"October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and women should talk to their physicians about what screenings are right for them," said Commissioner O'Dowd.

Each year in New Jersey, more than 19,000 residents are diagnosed with colorectal, cervical, breast or prostate cancer and more than 4,000 die of those cancers each year.

"No one in New Jersey should have to forego cancer screening because they can't afford to come to a center like this," added Commissioner O'Dowd.

The NJCEED Program provides funding to all 21 counties in New Jersey through 22 screening programs called NJCEED Lead Agencies. Those agencies include hospitals, health departments, community health centers and community-based organizations.

The Hunterdon Regional Cancer Center has provided more than 1,600 cancer screenings since its program began in 1997.

"For the past 15 years, Hunterdon Regional Cancer Center has been the recipient of a grant through the Department of Health's NJCEED program," said Robert P. Wise, President and CEO of Hunterdon Healthcare. "These funds have helped us provide free screening services for breast, cervical, colorectal and prostate cancer as well as outreach, education and case management services to individuals who do not have adequate health insurance. This grant has made it possible for many individuals in our community to receive potentially life-saving cancer exams."

To find a NJCEED screening site please visit: <http://nj.gov/health/cancer/njceed/index.shtml>

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