



Governor Phil Murphy

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Newark, N.J.

First Lady Tammy Murphy to Host Fourth Family Festival in Newark to Fight Maternal and Infant Health Crisis

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NEWARK— On Saturday, June 8, First Lady Tammy Murphy will host her fourth Family Festival in Newark. As part of Nurture NJ, her statewide awareness campaign, the First Lady developed the Family Festival event series which targets cities with high rates of maternal and infant mortality and connects mothers, fathers, grandparents, and anyone else involved in taking care of a child with state, county, and local resources—creating a one-stop shop for state, county, and local resources.

The Newark Family Festival, which is funded by The Nicholson Foundation, is hosted in collaboration with the Office of Mayor Ras Baraka, BRICK Education Network, the Office of Assemblywoman Cleopatra Tucker, Office of Assemblywoman Shanique Speight, the Newark Board of Education, and the Greater Newark Healthcare Coalition, and will feature over 130 participating community organizations. Attendees will have access to prenatal care and doulas, blood pressure and sugar screenings, eye exams, pediatric services, mental health and addiction services, energy assistance programs, child care centers, food and housing assistance programs, and more. There will also be performances from local artists, raffle prizes, face painting, balloon animals, food, and much more.

"New Jersey's maternal and infant mortality rates are alarming, and for women and babies of color the statistics are even more dire," **said First Lady Tammy Murphy**. "Our goal is to make New Jersey the safest place in the United States to give birth and to do that, we are working collaboratively to tackle the implicit bias in our health care systems and the economic and social factors that contribute to these disparities. Through our statewide Nurture NJ campaign, these Family Festivals seek to address those economic and social factors by connecting parents and caregivers with resources for care, support, resources, and relief."

Black women in New Jersey are five times more likely than white women to die from childbirth-related complications, and our urban centers like Newark, Trenton, Camden, and Paterson have the worst outcomes. Newark's Family Festival will be the fourth in the state, with previous festivals held in Paterson, Trenton, and Camden. During the last three festivals, over 1,100 attendees interacted with over 250 providers to learn more about state, county, and local programs and services.

Nurture NJ is committed to reducing infant and maternal mortality and morbidity and ensuring equitable maternal and infant care among women and children of all races and ethnicities. The campaign, which is devoted to serving every mother, every baby, and every family, includes a multi-pronged, multi-agency approach to improve maternal and infant health among New Jersey women and children. Nurture NJ includes internal collaboration between departments and agencies; an annual Black Maternal and Infant Health Leadership Summit; the First Lady's Family Festival event series; and a robust social media strategy to inform and raise awareness.

"I'm thrilled the First Lady is bringing the Family Festival to the great City of Newark," **said New Jersey Department**

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of Health Commissioner Dr. Shereef Elnahal. "Women and families have a chance to attend a one-stop-shop for services, opportunities, and a wonderful chance to spend the day with other families seeking support."

"NJ Human Services looks forward to joining the First Lady on Saturday to advance our shared goal of improving maternal and infant health throughout New Jersey," **said New Jersey Department of Human Services Commissioner Carole Johnson.** "Human Services and our partners will be there to help families get connected to health care coverage, food assistance, child care, emergency assistance, free eye screenings and more. We look forward to seeing everyone and helping New Jerseyans learn more about the great programs and services available to support their families."

"The First Lady's Family Festival series gives New Jersey's families an opportunity to connect to their community and identify and access the services that are available to them, through both state and local government," **said New Jersey Department of Children and Families Commissioner Christine Beyer.** "I applaud the First Lady's efforts to support families by bringing the services and supports of New Jersey State government to their communities. The First Lady's Family Festival series is an exercise in service-minded government that will keep families safe, healthy and connected."

"I want to thank First Lady Tammy Murphy for bringing her Family Festival to Newark and I fully encourage all residents to attend," **said City of Newark Mayor Ras Baraka.** "The Festival is not only a day of fun, games, and exciting children's activities for the City of Newark, it is much more. The First Lady is using the Family Festival as an extraordinary opportunity to bring awareness to New Jersey's maternal and infant mortality rates. The disparity in maternal and birth outcomes for African-American women and infants is overwhelming and is a massive health crisis. I applaud her work to protect women and children and this fun and impactful festival that will bring critical services to Newarkers to change these outcomes. The First Lady is once again continuing her commitment to the people of Newark."

"It is unacceptable to think that New Jersey ranks 47th out of 50 states in overall maternal mortality," **said Senator M. Teresa Ruiz.** "This statistic has revealed an injustice in our state's healthcare system and we need to begin to heal the women and children who have been adversely impacted by these inequalities. I am proud to be championing legislation to improve maternal mortality and I am glad to have a partner in the First Lady in addressing this public health crisis."

"Maternal and infant mortality rates among people of color in New Jersey are appalling, especially when you compare them to other demographics," **said Senator Ron Rice.** "I am glad Tammy Murphy recognizes the need to combat this epidemic, and is willing to make it her priority while being First Lady. I am willing to provide whatever means necessary to make sure we come to a successful conclusion for all mothers and children of color."

"We thank First Lady Tammy Murphy for coming to the great City of Newark to host her fourth Family Festival to combat New Jersey's maternal and infant health crisis by raising awareness. By supporting mothers through their pregnancy and after giving birth, we strengthen families. That is the reason why the Assembly introduced 14 measures improving maternal healthcare-- to ensure better outcomes for mothers, babies and their families as a whole. Reducing the excessive rates of mothers' and babies' deaths in New Jersey requires a multi-pronged approach to improving our maternal healthcare system. Ensuring families are supported in the way they should be supported during pregnancies will create stronger families and safer childbirths in the state," **said Assemblywomen Shanique Speight and Eliana Pintor Marin.**

"We applaud First Lady Tammy Murphy for creating the Family Festival event series to raise awareness about the high rates of maternal and infant mortality in cities like Newark. Childbirth is about life and we must make every effort to preserve the joy of life and motherhood for all New Jersey families. We accomplish this by supporting families and raising awareness of the importance of prenatal and postnatal healthcare for New Jersey moms through events like this one," **said Assemblymembers Cleopatra Tucker and Ralph Caputo.**

"The Nicholson Foundation is proud to support the Newark Family Festival and partner with the office of the First Lady in helping community residents connect with needed health and social services," **said Arturo Brito, Executive Director of The Nicholson Foundation.** "We want to ensure that all residents of Newark have the opportunity for a healthy, happy, and productive life."

"BRICK Education Network is delighted to work alongside First Lady Tammy Murphy to bring much needed resources and information to the residents of Newark," **said Dominique Lee, CEO and Founder of BRICK Education Network.** "The First Lady's Nurture NJ initiative highlights the high infant mortality rates amongst African-American mothers, whom are a significant percentage of the population we serve in the South Ward. It is our hope that by engaging with families and providers we will bring more awareness and resources to address this most pressing issue."

"The Greater Newark Healthcare Coalition is grateful for First Lady Murphy's leadership regarding maternal and infant health and for the opportunity to support her vision through this event and related efforts to better connect Greater Newark residents with services and supports," **said Keri Logosso-Misurell, Executive Director of Greater Newark Healthcare Coalition.** "We are committed to working together to eliminate health disparities locally and

statewide.”

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