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First Lady Tammy Murphy and New Jersey Department of Health Announce \$10.5M Federal Grant to Improve Maternal Health

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For Release:  
September 24, 2019

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## First Lady Tammy Murphy and New Jersey Department of Health Announce \$10.5M Federal Grant to Improve Maternal Health

**TRENTON** - First Lady Tammy Murphy and the New Jersey Department of Health today announced the award of a \$2.1 million a year grant for five years from the Health Resources and Services Administration to advance health equity and address disparities in maternal health outcomes.

“Every mother deserves the opportunity for a healthy birth experience and a healthy child,” **said First Lady Tammy Murphy.** “Skin color should not impact the quality of care received or chances of surviving childbirth, nor should it determine whether children live to see their first birthday. This grant will go a long

way toward addressing disparities in health outcomes and establishing New Jersey as a leader in maternal and infant health. Together, and only together, will we make New Jersey the safest place in the nation to deliver a baby.”

This funding will support the work of the New Jersey Maternity Care Quality Collaborative (NJMCQC), a statutorily mandated multidisciplinary team of stakeholders who will oversee the transformation of maternal healthcare in the state. The collaborative will establish a shared vision and statewide goals for key health services-focused on decreasing maternal deaths, injuries and racial and ethnic disparities. The grant funding will be used to promote innovative, evidenced-informed strategies for improving maternity care delivery in the state and the elimination of disparities in outcomes for mothers and their babies. The grant will also support maternal mortality and morbidity data collection and analysis with a focus on moving data to action.

“Recognizing the need to address maternal mortality and complications, the Department of Health has been focusing on enhancing data collection, developing strategies for quality improvement, eliminating disparities and identifying best practices to replicate across the state,” **said Department of Health Acting Commissioner Judith M. Persichilli.** “This grant funding will allow the Department to further implement this important work to avoid preventable death and injuries to New Jersey’s mothers regardless of their race or ethnicity, economic status or insurance coverage.”

Prior to applying for the grant, the Department conducted a comprehensive needs assessment and goal-setting process that aligned internal efforts, engaged all relevant stakeholders, and established areas of focus for evidence-based reform.

The Department will undertake several activities to drive innovation in maternity care delivery, including implicit bias training, promoting access to long-acting reversible contraceptives during the postpartum period, fostering collaborative learning for providers such as OB/GYNs, community health workers and doulas, and ensuring connectivity to risk assessment screening tools.

The work performed under this grant will build upon earlier efforts and make sustainable progress in transforming infrastructure that will benefit women’s health beyond the grant period.

The Department was also recently awarded \$450,000 in federal funding to improve timeliness and accuracy of case review and determination conducted by the New Jersey Maternal Mortality Review Committee.

This work is being carried out under the umbrella of Nurture NJ, First Lady Tammy Murphy’s statewide awareness campaign, which 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 and programing 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.

“When we review the death of a mother, we are honoring her and her loved ones, but we must not stop there,” **said Senator Joseph Vitale who sponsored legislation creating the NJMCQC and codifying the Maternal Mortality Review Committee.** “We must also learn from her death. The New Jersey Maternity Care Quality Collaborative is uniquely poised to move the findings from Maternal Mortality Review Committee into action that will save lives and eliminate disparities in maternal health care.”


“All women deserve access to the best evidence-based, risk-appropriate care,” **said Assemblyman Herb Conaway, MD.** “We know that nationally three in five maternal deaths are preventable and that is the same in New Jersey. When women receive the right care at the right time, we can save their lives. The New Jersey Maternity Care Quality Collaborative is pivotal in achieving those goals.”

*More information on Nurture NJ can be found at [nj.gov/NurtureNJ](https://nj.gov/NurtureNJ).*

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*Follow First Lady Tammy Murphy on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#).*



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Last Reviewed: 9/24/2019