

Governor Phil Murphy

New Jersey Economic Development Authority and Irish Centre for Maternal and Child Health Research Establish Global Partnership to Advance First Lady Tammy Murphy's Nurture NJ Initiative

04/26/2022

CORK, IRELAND -- New Jersey First Lady Tammy Murphy and New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) Chief Executive Officer Tim Sullivan today visited the Irish Centre for Maternal and Child Health Research (<https://www.infantcentre.ie/>), Ireland's first translational research Centre for maternal and child health, known as "INFANT." Hosted at University College Cork (UCC), one of Ireland's leading universities, INFANT is answering the international need for innovation and research on pregnancy, birth, infancy, and childhood health to improve maternal and infant health outcomes.

Today's visit included the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the NJEDA and INFANT, which establishes collaboration through sharing of research findings, clinical work, and best practices that will support the mission of both parties to be at the forefront of groundbreaking research and accelerate efforts to advance health outcomes of mothers and infants.

As part of First Lady Murphy's Nurture NJ initiative, the First Lady and members of a New Jersey delegation to Ireland visited INFANT to gather information as the Garden State works to launch a Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center in Trenton. The Center is a key recommendation from First Lady Murphy's Nurture NJ Strategic Plan, which aims to make New Jersey the safest and most equitable state in the United States to deliver and raise a baby.

"The INFANT Centre is tackling maternal and infant health issues in a creative and innovative way," said **First Lady Murphy**. "Their model is something we can learn from as we develop the Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center in Trenton, and we hope INFANT can benefit from our experience as well. Our research center will continue the work of Nurture NJ and put New Jersey on the cutting edge of maternal health, helping us to not only solve our maternal health crisis in the Garden State, but making us a national leader in the field. Together, we are committed to improving outcomes for our mothers and babies in both New Jersey and Ireland. We are thrilled to establish a lasting and fruitful relationship with INFANT, and look forward to sharing best practices and supporting each other's work."

"The First Lady Murphy's plans to launch a Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Centre in Trenton as part of the NJ Nurture initiative is excellent news for mothers and their babies in the state of New Jersey," said **Professor Geraldine Boylan, Director of the INFANT Centre**. "It is essential for strong teams in this area to work together so that we can deliver the best research informed healthcare to improve maternal and infant health outcomes worldwide. INFANT's success to date has been achieved through excellent research and innovation, a highly committed multidisciplinary team of researchers, strong national and international partnerships and generous support from UCC, funding agencies and philanthropists. INFANT looks forward to learning from, and with, the Trenton team as they embark on this exciting journey and in partnership, we aim to build a coalition of support for research and innovation in maternal and infant health on both sides of the Atlantic."

"Under Governor Murphy and First Lady Murphy's leadership, New Jersey is making ground-breaking investments in research, innovation, and community revitalization practices that will help eliminate the staggering racial disparities currently present in maternal and infant health outcomes," said **NJEDA Chief Executive Officer Tim Sullivan**. "By learning from, and collaborating with, leading organizations like INFANT, New Jersey will be better equipped to address these disparities while making informed decisions about the development of New Jersey's own Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center."

New Jersey ranks 47th in the nation for maternal deaths and has one of the widest racial disparities for both maternal and infant mortality. A Black mother in New Jersey is over seven times more likely than a white mother to die from maternity-related complications, and a Black baby is over three times more likely than a white baby to die before his or her first birthday.

In 2019, First Lady Murphy launched Nurture NJ (<https://nj.gov/governor/admin/fl/nurturenj.shtml>) in response to New Jersey's need to improve access to care for expectant mothers and babies, with a commitment to both reducing maternal and infant mortality and morbidity and ensuring equitable care among women and children of all races and ethnicities. This awareness campaign focuses on improving collaboration and programming between all departments, agencies, and stakeholders to make New Jersey the safest and most equitable place in the United States to give birth and raise a baby.

Last month, the NJEDA entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the John S. Watson Institute of Urban Policy and Research at Kean University (<https://www.njeda.com/njeda-takes-steps-to-advance-development-of-maternal-and-infant-health-innovation-center-in-trenton/>) to undertake an iterative community engagement process to further the development of the Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center. This process is designed to build trust and support from Trenton residents and organizational stakeholders, as well as understand the services needed to improve maternal and infant health outcomes for Trenton's new and expectant mothers and children. The NJEDA has also expanded an existing contract with Jones Lang LaSalle Americas, Inc. (JLL), enabling JLL to undertake the initial real estate planning for the Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center.

Governor Phil Murphy

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