

Governor Phil Murphy

First Lady Tammy Murphy Hosts 22nd Family Festival in Orange to Address Maternal and Infant Health Crisis

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The Family Festival Series Has Now Reached 14,950 Families Across 11 Counties

ORANGE – First Lady Tammy Murphy marked her 22nd Nurture NJ Family Festival in Orange today, gathering 1,100 attendees to receive valuable state, county and local resources for expectant and new parents, including health care, housing support, food assistance, child care and more.

"Over the past seven years, our Family Festivals have provided support and resources to countless mothers and families across the Garden State. There are incredible resources available to New Jerseyans and – with help from our partners – we are putting them within reach in every community we visit," **said First Lady Tammy Murphy**. "Communities like Orange represent the very best of New Jersey. However, we know that communities of color experience significant disparities in maternal and infant health outcomes. That is why I look forward to continuing our festival series in targeted cities as we work to make New Jersey the safest and most equitable place in the nation to have a baby and raise a family."

In a city like Orange, with large Black and Latino communities, the consequences of New Jersey's maternal and infant health crisis are unmistakable. In New Jersey, a Black mother is nearly seven times more likely and Hispanic mothers are three and a half times more likely than white mothers to die of maternity-related complications. Orange ranks sixth among our cities that experience high rates of Black infant mortality.

Launched by First Lady Tammy Murphy in 2019, Nurture NJ is a statewide initiative committed to addressing our state's maternal and infant health crisis. Since its inception, Nurture NJ has seen over 65 pieces of maternal and infant health legislation signed by Governor Murphy. The initiative has also developed and implemented groundbreaking programs and policies, such as the first-of-its-kind in the nation Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority (MIHIA), which is tasked with overseeing the groundbreaking New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center based in Trenton, and will be the arm of government that continues the vital work of Nurture NJ past the Murphy Administration.

Under First Lady Murphy's leadership, Nurture NJ has made significant policy achievements including: developing the Nurture NJ Maternal and Infant Health Strategic Plan – of which over half of its more than 80 recommendations have been started or completed; becoming the second state to expand Medicaid coverage to 365 days postpartum; establishing Medicaid reimbursement for doula care; increasing all perinatal Medicaid provider reimbursements to 100 percent of Medicare rates; and launching the most robust-in-the-nation universal nurse home visitation program so that every new parent is visited by a nurse in their home for free within two weeks after bringing home a new baby. Through these innovative policies and more, Nurture NJ has positioned New Jersey as a national leader in the fight against the maternal and infant health crisis.

The Orange Family Festival was hosted in partnership with the Office of First Lady Tammy Murphy, Nurture NJ, Senator Britnee Timberlake, Assemblywoman Carmen Morales, Assemblyman Mike Venezia, County of Essex, City of Orange, Orange Public Schools, Essex Pregnancy and Parenting, Greater Newark Health Care Coalition, Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey, Newark Community Health Centers, Partnership for Maternal and Child Health of Northern NJ, Perinatal Health Equity Initiative, Prevent Child Abuse NJ, Programs for Parents, RWJBarnabas Health and The Burke Foundation.

"Partnering with First Lady Tammy Murphy for the Family Festival in Essex County, Orange, NJ, was a true privilege. This event united families and provided invaluable resources, aligning perfectly with my legislative priorities around children and families. My gratitude goes to the First Lady, the City of Orange, and all other organizers and partners for orchestrating such an inspiring and impactful event," **said Senator Britnee Timberlake**.

"I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to First Lady Tammy Murphy for her unwavering support and dedication to our communities. I am thrilled to welcome the family festival to Orange, NJ. This investment not only enhances our community but also creates opportunities for our residents. Together, we are building a brighter future for our families and ensuring that the Oranges have all the resources and support that our families deserve," **said Assemblywoman Carmen Morales**.

"I'm proud to support First Lady Tammy Murphy's Family Fun Day in Orange, which provides critical resources and services to our families in a warm, community-centered setting. This event exemplifies our commitment to ensuring all New Jersey families have access to the support they need to thrive," **said Assemblyman Mike Venezia**.

"If there is anything that we learned from the COVID pandemic, it's that promoting public health and reaching out to the community to make health care more accessible are most important. Events like the Family Festival enable us to connect with underserved and hard to reach communities and provide a one-stop location where residents can begin their journey to wellness. Working with the state, health agencies and community partners, we are Putting Essex County's Health First," **said Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr.**

"The core of family health is ensuring that every family, regardless of background or circumstance, has access to the care and resources they deserve. Through this event, we celebrate the incredible collaboration between the NJDOH, RWJBarnabas Health, and our community partners, working together to bridge the gaps in health equity and empower families across Essex County. Together, we are building a healthier, more equitable future for all," **said Maya Harlow, Essex County Health Officer/ Director**.

"With open arms we welcome First Lady Tammy Murphy and her staff as we collaborate to launch the Orange Family Festival on Saturday. This family and resource connection effort will serve as a direct pipeline to successes in Orange households, schools and community spaces by focusing on children and parents in need. We appreciate First Lady Murphy and the Governor for helping to extend our reach to every part of our community," **said Mayor Dwayne Warren of Orange.**

"The Orange School District supports opportunities for families to engage with our community partners. I am quite pleased that the City of Orange was selected to host this amazing event for our community. I believe the powerful information must be disseminated and this event is right in line with this thinking," **said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Gerald Fitzhugh, II.**

"First Lady Tammy Murphy's Family Festival in Orange is an inspiration to the people in these challenging times. The event clearly guides families in underserved communities to access the care and resources that are available in their community in an atmosphere of hope for a better and healthier life. The NJ Nurture program gives families, moms and children wealth in health," **said Dr Pamela Clarke, President & CEO of Newark Community Health Centers Inc.**

"Improving maternal and infant health is central to creating a healthier New Jersey and that is what the Family Festivals are all about. Everyone deserves access to affordable healthcare no matter who they are or where they live and we are grateful for the opportunity to continue our partnership with the Governor and First Lady. As New Jersey's health solutions leader, Horizon is meeting our neighbors where they live and helping them achieve their best health through partnerships like this one," **said Wendy Morriarty, VP and Chief Medicaid Officer, Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of NJ.**

"Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center, together with RWJBarnabas Health, remains committed to providing equitable health care, helping to improve the health and well-being of our community," **said Richard L. Davis, President and CEO of Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center.** "We are honored to be a part of First Lady Tammy Murphy's Family Festival, which is in alignment with our system mission to partner with our communities to build and sustain a healthier New Jersey."

"The Burke Foundation is proud to support the First Lady's Nurture NJ Family Festivals which bring together families and the support they need to thrive within the communities where they live. We're committed to improving maternal and child health in New Jersey by investing \$15 million over the next five years in programs that will improve families' health and well-being, and we're honored to be part of today's celebration in Orange," **said Atiya Weiss, Executive Director of the Burke Foundation.**

"The Greater Newark Health Care Coalition is proud to partner with First Lady Tammy Murphy and our local and state partners to bring so many resources and programs to the Orange community and its neighbors. Having access to many critical resources under one roof in the community helps eliminate accessibility barriers that prevent our families from benefiting from great programs. We thank First Lady Tammy Murphy, Nurture NJ, and the sponsors for their vision and commitment to improve maternal and child health in NJ," **said Andrea Martinez-Mejia, Executive Director, Greater Newark Health Care Coalition.**

"The Family Festival brings communities together and provides important resources to strengthen and empower families. We are thrilled to be part of this event which supports children and families and exemplifies prevention in partnership in New Jersey," **said Gina Hernandez, CEO and Executive Director, Prevent Child Abuse-New Jersey and Essex Pregnancy and Parenting.**

"We are thrilled to participate in the First Lady of New Jersey's Family Festival, where we can stand alongside families and community partners dedicated to a future with equitable healthcare. Our participation in This event reflects our unwavering commitment to addressing disparities in Black infant and maternal health, and we look forward to empowering and supporting families with the resources, knowledge, and compassion they deserve," **said Dr. Nastassia Harris, Founder of Perinatal Health Equity Initiative.**

"We are excited to be part of the festival, so we can meet Essex County parents to share information about the New Jersey Child Care Assistance Program, how to find quality child care and talk, generally, with them about their child care needs," **said Nayibe Capellan, CEO Programs for Parents.**

"We are thrilled to support the First Lady's Family Festival. These events not only provide vital health resources for the residents of Orange, but they bring together the community for a day of fun," **said Mariekarl Vilceus-Talty, President & CEO, Partnership for Maternal and Child Health of Northern New Jersey.**

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