

Governor Phil Murphy

# First Lady Tammy Murphy to Host Family Festival in Newark to Address Maternal and Infant Health Crisis

09/15/2022

*Newark Family Festival is a continuation of series of festivals held statewide as a part of her Nurture NJ initiative*

**NEWARK** – First Lady Tammy Murphy today announced that she will host her seventh large Family Festival at Mulberry Commons in Newark, NJ on Saturday, September 17 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. This will be the first large-scale Family Festival the First Lady has held since before the COVID-19 pandemic. The Family Festival attendees will have access to a one-stop-shop for state, county, and local resources - including services for expectant and new moms, healthcare, housing support, food assistance, child care, energy assistance, and New Jersey Motor Vehicles Commission services such as driver's license renewals, REAL ID distribution and more. There will also be free food, music, raffle prizes, face painting, and many more activities for the whole family.

"I thank the residents of Newark and Mayor Ras Baraka for welcoming me back to host another Family Festival here in this great city," said **First Lady Tammy Murphy**. "Our last Newark Family Festival in 2019 was attended by over 1,500 families and 130 organizations. These festivals serve as a one-stop-shop for expectant mothers and families to access critical resources throughout our state—from doula care to childcare to housing assistance and more. I look forward to continuing our festival series as we work to make New Jersey the safest and most equitable place in the nation to have a baby and raise a family."

New Jersey experiences among the largest disparities in maternal and infant health outcomes. A Black mother is over seven times more likely than a white mother to die of pregnancy-related complications, and a Black baby is three times more likely than a white baby to die before his or her first birthday. The rate for a Hispanic mother is three times that of a white mother, and the rate for a Hispanic baby is 1.5 times that of a white baby.

In a city like Newark, with large Black and Latino communities, the consequences of New Jersey's maternal and infant health crisis are unmistakable and heartbreaking. Between 2009 and 2019, Newark had the fourth highest rate of Black infant deaths and the sixth highest rate of Hispanic infant deaths.

In 2019, First Lady Tammy Murphy launched Nurture NJ, a statewide program committed to reducing the maternal and infant mortality epidemic in New Jersey and ensuring equitable care among women and children of all races and ethnicities. Since its inception, Nurture NJ has created a statewide strategic plan, seen 43 pieces of maternal and infant health legislation signed by Governor Murphy, developed and implemented groundbreaking programs and policies, hosted 16 Family Festivals statewide, and more – positioning New Jersey as a national leader in fighting the maternal and infant health crisis.

The Newark Family Festival will be hosted by the First Lady's Nurture NJ initiative in partnership with the City of Newark, Mayor Ras J. Baraka, Newark Community Health Centers, Ironbound Community Corporation, South Ward Promise Neighborhood, Newark Beth Israel Medical Center, Congressman Donald Payne, Senator Teresa Ruiz, Assemblywoman Shanique Speight, New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission, the Burke Foundation, and Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey.

"Since First Lady Tammy Murphy's Family Festivals were first introduced several years ago, they have been a highlight of our Mobile Unit's schedule travelling the Garden State," said **Acting New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission Chief Administrator Latrecia "Trish" Littles-Floyd**. "The Family Festivals are a great opportunity for the NJMVC to connect with and help often underserved communities across the state with resources and programs brought directly to them in trusted locations such as hospitals and health care centers. We look forward to additional opportunities to continue the MVC's valued partnership with the Office of the First Lady in these important events."

"On behalf of Newark residents, we are thankful to First Lady Murphy for hosting the Newark Family Festival in our great city," said **City of Newark Mayor Ras J. Baraka**. "This incredible event is a day of fun, resources, learning and more importantly is a critical component of First Lady Tammy Murphy's Nurture NJ initiative. I encourage all residents to attend and be a part of this important effort that works to eliminate disparities in birth outcomes as the infant mortality rate varies widely across the state and disproportionately impacts our women of color at a much higher rate. The work to support mothers and entire families protects us all and will only continue to make New Jersey a national leader in creating better health outcomes."

"Newark Community Health Centers is on track in 2022 to serve over 46,761 patients. Of which 63% are women. We expect to welcome approximately 1,797 pregnant women for prenatal care in 2022. We hope to increase the number of women who enter prenatal care in the first trimester from 75% to over 80%. We also hope to reduce the percentage of low birth weight babies to below 6%. All this hope can be achieved by education, increase access to NCHC and partnership with the women and family in the community. Let us hope together because we are here for you every day," said **Dr. Pamela Clarke, CEO/President, Newark Community Health Centers**.

"Ironbound Community Corporation is thrilled to be part of the Newark Family Festival, hosted by First Lady Tammy Murphy. Providing families with a direct link to services is powerful, and demonstrates alignment with a strong community. The families from our Newark community deserve to know that their leaders are executing resource-driven events that are in tune with the true needs of our local community," said **Hazel Applewhite, Executive Director, Ironbound Community Corporation**.

"The South Ward Promise Neighborhood, part of the BRICK Education Network, is extremely honored to partner with First Lady Tammy Murphy on the Family Festival in Newark, NJ. This festival is vital to the community to ensure families and the community-at-large are connected with the state, county, and local programs and resources that address New Jersey's maternal and infant health crisis. We are honored to participate and be part of the solution to address this crisis," said **Dominique Lee, CEO, South Ward Promise Neighborhood**.

"Newark Beth Israel Medical Center is honored to support the Newark Family Festival and we applaud First Lady Tammy Murphy on her efforts to empower our families with the tools they need for better health," said **Darrell K. Terry, Sr., MHA, MPH, FACHE, FHELA, President and Chief Executive Officer, Newark Beth Israel Medical Center and Children's Hospital of New Jersey**.

"I applaud New Jersey's First Lady Tammy Murphy for her work to support mothers and underserved communities," **said Rep. Donald M. Payne, Jr.** "New Jersey has excellent programs to help provide a range of benefits to residents, such as healthcare, housing support, food assistance and child care. But unfortunately, too many residents do not know about these exceptional services. First Lady Murphy's Family Festival in Newark will connect the state's service providers with the people who can benefit from them the most. I am proud to support First Lady Murphy's work and look forward to her Family Festival."

"Navigating through state services can be a daunting task for anyone, especially parents with young children. By creating spaces that engage the community one on one, we ensure that New Jersey residents see government in action. I am proud to partner once again with First Lady Tammy Murphy to bring the Family Festival series back to Newark. With events such as these we hope to empower and celebrate our communities all the while providing a day full of fun activities for our families," **said Senate Majority Leader M. Teresa Ruiz.**

"By raising awareness for the resources available to families throughout New Jersey, we are taking firm steps to address the maternal and infant mortality crisis," **said Assemblywoman Shanique Speight.** "As parents know, starting and raising a young family comes with many challenges. That's why we must do our part to eliminate the social and economic barriers that make it difficult for mothers to access the services and care necessary to keep themselves and their young babies healthy. I am proud to partner with First Lady Tammy Murphy on this event."

"Expectant mothers in our communities deserve to know what services are available at the federal, state and local levels to connect them with affordable, quality health care," **said Assemblywoman Eliana Pintor Marin.** "The upcoming Family Festival will help many young families in Newark access the prenatal and postnatal support necessary to combat New Jersey's maternal and infant health crisis."

"Bringing families and mothers together to share plenty of quality healthcare resources and services is going to dramatically help our community," **said Assemblywoman Cleopatra Tucker.** "I am proud to be a part of the Family Festival in Newark with First Lady Tammy Murphy. This event is putting family first. The maternal health care resources that will be brought directly to the people of Newark will truly help our residents."

"When starting a family, having the proper resources are vital. Often, it is difficult for families to find the right healthcare information," **said Assemblyman Ralph Caputo.** "This event is bringing mothers and families the maternal and infant information they need to start a healthy and happy family. I am thrilled about the Family Festival and am excited to be a part of something that will bolster family life for New Jersey residents."

"The staff and Board of the Burke Foundation eagerly support community-based initiatives that promote the health and wellbeing of New Jersey babies, mothers, fathers, and families during the earliest stages of a child's life. Through First Lady Tammy Murphy's leadership, Nurture NJ Family Festivals provide the opportunity to celebrate and come together as a community – sharing vital resources and support systems to help families thrive. We're delighted to partner in bringing family festivals to Newark and communities across New Jersey," **said Atiya Weiss, Executive Director, The Burke Foundation.**

"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 New Jersey.**

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## Statewide

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