



Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers

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CAMDEN RESIDENTS DEMAND COMMUNITY INVESTMENT AT “TAKE BACK OUR HEALTH” RALLY

“Take Back Our Health” aimed to change the conversation about health care, encourage community empowerment, and highlight the social correlates of health

Camden, NJ— Residents from across Camden gathered to “Take Back Our Health” in front of City Hall today for a rally organized by the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers. Participants then headed to their own neighborhoods for activities designed to help them get active and build local leadership for a healthier Camden.

As the possibility of a repeal of the Affordable Care Act subsidies, ralliers sought to change the conversation over health care reform and reimagine what a healthier community looks like. Leaders from the Camden Coalition’s Community Advisory Council and [Faith in Prevention](#) program aimed to democratize the health care debate by focusing beyond the four walls of the hospital and into the neighborhoods and conditions where Americans work, live, and play.

“In order for our community to flourish, we have to start with health because we can’t function without being healthy. This rally is a stepping point to empower the community to take back our health, education, and ability to work,” said Nancy Pope-White, president of the Camden Coalition’s Community Advisory Council. “We want to ask our leaders to invest in the community and give us the resources we need to take control of our health.”

Unlike most developed countries that invest about twice as much on social services as they do in health care, the U.S. spends just **60 cents** for every dollar spent on health care, even as the health of our nation’s population lags behind on such metrics as life expectancy, maternal mortality, and infant mortality. Health care disparities are especially evident in Camden, where residents are at greater risk of chronic illness and other health problems than people living anywhere else in South Jersey.

Rally speakers included Pope-White; City Council President Frank Moran, Democratic nominee for mayor of Camden; and Dr. Wendy Ellis, project director of Building Community Resistance at The George Washington University’s Milken Institute School of Public Health. Other speakers included Reverend Yvonne Lawrence-Sims, co-chair of the Camden Coalition’s Community Advisory Council, and Hopeworks ‘N Camden college success coach Soley Berrios. Get Healthy Camden, the American Cancer Society Team HEALE Camden, the New Jersey Department of Health, and Virtua sponsored the event.

“Fostering community resilience is essential to improving public health outcomes,” said Wendy Ellis of Building Community Resilience. “We are building more resilient, healthy communities through

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partnerships that align large systems--children's health, education, government--with one another and also with smaller community organizations. In doing so, we can develop trust and relationships with communities to promote healing.”

Following the rally, attendees headed back to their neighborhoods for an afternoon of activities and events, including yoga, meditation, zumba, line dancing, and a cooking demonstration by Food Network celebrity chef and Camden native [Aaron McCargo](#). A mobile van from the city’s health department visited the neighborhood sites to provide blood pressure and cholesterol testing, as well as free flu shots.

“Health improvement goes beyond care delivered in hospitals and clinics. It is critical health care leaders and professionals connect with local faith-based and community organizations to broaden their impact on the health of the community,” said Commissioner Cathleen D. Bennett of the New Jersey Department of Health. “The New Jersey Department of Health is proud to partner with the Camden Coalition to empower the city’s residents to take control of their health and support them across the continuum of wellness through investments in programs like Faith in Prevention, which link faith-based organizations to the the health care community.”

Event partners include CAMcare Health Corporation, Camden Area Health Education Center, Camden Children’s Garden, Camden City School District, Camden County Board of Education, Camden County Department of Health and Human Services, Camden County Police Department, Camden County Women’s Center, Camden Fire Department, Camden Promise Zone, Cathedral Kitchen, Cooper University Health Care, Hispanic Family Center of Southern New Jersey, HopeWorks ‘N Camden, Lourdes Wellness Center, Aaron McCargo, Miguel’s Pharmacy, Project H.O.P.E., April Saul, St. Joseph’s Carpenter Society, STARS Adult Medical Day Care Center, The Food Bank of South Jersey, Wegmans, Walter White, and members of the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers.

“The people of Camden are the working poor,” said Pope-White, who has lived in Camden for 35 years. “We are working two to three jobs and want to feed ourselves, have a roof over our heads, and enjoy time with our family. We are also college-educated with advanced degrees. This is a time for us to come together, build on our neighborhood pride, and advocate for our community health from the ground up.”

About the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers

The Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers is a citywide coalition of over 25 hospitals, primary care providers, and community organizations working together to deliver better health care to vulnerable citizens in Camden, NJ. Founded by Dr. Jeffrey Brenner in 2002, the Coalition knits together a fragmented health care system for patients with complex needs and repeated, ineffective and expensive hospitalizations, using smart data and holistic, multi-disciplinary team care. We believe if we can deliver better care at lower cost here in Camden, it can be done for everyone, everywhere in America.

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