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**Local Team Participates in Public Health Leadership Program**

Lawrenceville, NJ –The Greater Mercer Public Health Partnership (GMPHP), a coalition of fourteen organizations, grantee of New Jersey Health Initiatives—a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, has been selected for the National Leadership Academy for the Public’s Health (NLAPH) fellowship program. GMPHP’s coalition includes the United Way of Greater Mercer County, healthcare and public health providers representing Capital Health Medical Center-Hopewell, Princeton HealthCare System, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton, and St. Lawrence Rehabilitation Center, along with the local public health departments from Ewing, Hamilton, Lawrence, Hopewell, Montgomery, Princeton, East and West Windsor and Mercer County. The aim of the coalition work is to make a measureable improvement in the health of Mercer County residents.

GMPHP, is represented by a team comprised of Diane Grillo, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton ([RWJ Hamilton](#)); James Brownlee, City of Trenton and Trenton Health Team; George DiFerdinando, Princeton Board of Health; and Toni Lewis, United Way of Greater Mercer County ([UWGMC](#)) will participate in a multi-sectorial leadership training program through the NLAPH program, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). NLAPH is provided at no cost to the participants or the community.

The team will work on an applied health leadership project that tackles an important population health issue with the goal of improving our populations’ health, commonly referred to as public health outcomes. Mercer County is ranked 12<sup>th</sup> healthiest of the 21 counties in New Jersey, according to the County Health Ranking & Roadmaps program, which is designed to help communities identify solutions to address the specific factors known to affect health.

The team assembled to undertake this critical issue includes representation from: Health Care, Government, and Community Based Organizations and Institutions. *“Our team will work to identify ways to increase healthy eating and active living opportunities for our community,”* says Diane Grillo, Vice President of Marketing and Communications for RWJ Hamilton *“We know that diabetes, heart disease, obesity and other chronic diseases are prevalent due in part to a lack of healthy lifestyle choices especially for the most vulnerable members of our community.”*

*“This training will allow us to facilitate the fine work already done by multiple community partners,”* according to George DiFerdinando, MD, MPH. James Brownlee, MPH, Director of Health & Human Services and Health Officer for the City of Trenton notes that, *“as team members, we are all leaders in our respective sectors and communities, having to work with less means we have to engage partners across various community sectors for support, this requires a different leadership skill set.”* As team lead, Toni Lewis, MPH, Project Director, United Way of Greater Mercer County explained, *“I am thrilled to be representing the UWGMC and that our team received such a prestigious national recognition. UWGMC is a leader in our community focused on transforming lives, and is continually collaborating with community partners to make Mercer County a healthier place to live and work.”*



Pictured above from left to right: George DiFerdinando, Diane Grillo, Milano Harden, Antonia Lewis, and James Brownlee.

NLAPH is a national program focused on improving population health by working with multi-sector leadership teams and training the teams through an applied, team-based collaborative leadership development model. The program is implemented by the Center for Health Leadership and Practice (CHLP), a center of the Public Health Institute (PHI), and will provide training and support for a period of one year.

*“This program will impart population health teams with the skills to lead across sectors and collaboratively solve complex population health problems in innovative ways,”* said Carmen Rita Nevarez MD, MPH, Vice President for External Relations and CHLP's Director. *“These are the types of leaders who will ultimately be able to drive critical efforts, such as the adoption of evidence-based policies and practices at the community level, which can have a tangible impact on health outcomes.”*

NLAPH will provide training and support to assist the team in successfully addressing the **Mercer County Health Improvement Plan** ([www.uwgmc.org/chip](http://www.uwgmc.org/chip)). Training and support will focus on two tracks. The first is the development of leadership skills, including personal and collaborative leadership in a multi-sector environment. The second emphasizes growth from team-based collaborative work to policy and systems change.

*About United Way of Greater Mercer County: United Way of Greater Mercer County is a transformer of lives. Our goal is to improve the financial stability, self-sufficiency, and health of all Mercer County residents. We are measuring results in terms of changed lives, cost savings and economic benefit returned to the Greater Mercer County Community. For more information about United Way of Greater Mercer County, please call 609.896.1912 or visit [www.uwgmc.org](http://www.uwgmc.org), @uwgreatermercer, or facebook.com/uwgmc.*

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