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NEW JERSEY HEALTH CARE QUALITY INSTITUTE



A BI-WEEKLY LOOK AT THE BUSINESS & POLITICS OF
HEALTH CARE IN NEW JERSEY

What's Included In This Edition:

Schwimmer Script - Take Five Interviews in Review: Highlighting Leaders To Know About

Mayors Wellness Campaign (MWC) - 2025 Champion of Health Award Winner



Schwimmer Script

Linda Schwimmer, JD
President & CEO, 

Take Five Interviews in Review: Highlighting Leaders To Know About

In each newsletter's popular **Take Five feature**, we share a five-question interview with leaders in health care delivery, payment, or policy in New Jersey. We highlight leaders from organizations we work with regularly, who span all sectors of health care and policy, and who provide a wide and valuable perspective on the challenges and opportunities they see in health care.

Enabling our members to learn from and engage with each other is an essential part of our work at the Quality Institute. Over the years, we've found that building trusted relationships and working together toward common goals can bring about policy and payment change. Yes, the incremental nature of change in health care can be maddening. But trust and common goals — along with accountability — are essential to driving meaningful and lasting improvements in health care safety, quality, and affordability.

Every year, we review the year's Take Fives to share the most viewed and assess the focus area themes for the year. In 2025, several key themes emerged: strengthening insurance coverage and access to care; supporting and expanding the health care workforce; sharing the growing role of academia in health care in New Jersey; and addressing the gaps in our mental health system. We also featured the Quality Institute's growing staff and portfolio of work.

I invite you to take a look at the Take Fives from 2025, especially if you missed any. I am certain you will learn something you didn't already know. I do every time I get to

the end of one of our interviews. And, as always, please reach out and share ideas for leaders and organizations you'd like us to feature.

[Read 2025 Take Five Interviews](#)



2025 Champion of Health Award Winner

The New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute proudly honors **Susy Rodriguez, Local Health Outreach Coordinator**, from the [City of Englewood](#), as the 2025 Champion of Health Award Winner.

Rodriguez revitalized Englewood's Mayor's Wellness Campaign, helping the community to earn Healthy Town to Watch (2023) and Healthy Town (2024) recognition. She has expanded the number of free, accessible health screenings, strengthened bilingual outreach with the Latino community, and built strong partnerships across city agencies, schools, and local organizations. Rodriguez inspires residents of all ages to engage in their well-being, and her inclusive leadership continues to unite Englewood and elevate community health.



Honorable Mentions:

- [Bergenfield](#) – **Liezl Cruz, RN, BSN**
- [Florence Township](#) – **Martin Eckert Jr.**
- [Jefferson Township](#) – **Melissa Kiritsis**
- [Montgomery Township](#) – **John Groeger**
- [Mountainside](#) – **Kim Moriak**
- [Rockaway Township](#) – **Brittany Bernstein**
- [West Orange](#) – **Michelle G. Jacobson-Malek**

Read the Full List



For information on how to join, please contact Virginia Tesser at vtesser@njhcqi.org.

To learn more about our current initiatives, please visit our website at www.njhcqi.org.

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