

[View this email in your browser](#)The Mayors Wellness Campaign logo, featuring a stylized graphic of four colored dots (blue, orange, red, green) arranged in a circle with lines connecting them.

## MAYORS WELLNESS CAMPAIGN<sup>®</sup>



## ***A Note from the Director***

Julie DeSimone, LSW  
*Director of Community Health*



*Dear Quality Institute Members,*

*As a valued member of our community, I invite you to explore the latest edition of the **Mayors Wellness Campaign (MWC) newsletter** — your gateway to staying informed and inspired by the powerful local efforts happening across New Jersey.*

*The MWC is a flagship program of the Quality Institute, designed to help municipalities advance community health, which is essential to our mission of improving the quality, safety, and affordability of health care statewide. Through this newsletter, we share stories, tools, and opportunities that reflect the innovation and commitment of towns working to create healthier communities.*

*I encourage you to read, share, and consider how you might collaborate with local leaders to amplify wellness where you live and work. Together, we can strengthen the health of all New Jersey communities.*

Warmly,  
Julie DeSimone  
Director of Community Health  
New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute

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## QUALITY INSTITUTE NEWS & UPDATES

### Connect with Katie for MWC Support & Guidance

As you may already know, in January [Katie Bisaha](#) was promoted to Program Officer on our Community Health team. In this role, Katie advances our community health initiatives statewide, including Conversation of Your Life (COYL) and the Mayors Wellness Campaign (MWC). A certified Mental Health First Aid instructor, Katie also brings a strong background in public health, with expertise in substance use prevention, nutrition education, and community wellness. You can reach out to Katie at [kbisaha@njhcqi.org](mailto:kbisaha@njhcqi.org) for questions about your MWC program, to share your program activities and photos, and for technical assistance in running your MWC activities.



***Congratulations, Katie!***



### Join us for our upcoming COYL Partner Meeting

Our next **COYL partner meeting** will be held on **Wednesday, July 10**. This is a great opportunity to connect with other communities leading advance care planning conversations, get updates from the Quality Institute, and plan COYL workshops in your community.

[Register Here](#)

## [Register Now for Mental Health First Aid Training](#)

With support from [The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey](#), we continue to provide free **Mental Health First Aid trainings** (MHFA) to people who work with youth and adults in the community. This training may be especially valuable to law enforcement, school employees, municipal employees, and those serving the public. Register below for our next training is on **July 17, 2025**. For more information, reach out to Katie Bisaha at [KBisaha@njhcqi.org](mailto:KBisaha@njhcqi.org).

[Register: Adult MHFA Training](#)

## [Check out our Midpoint Highlights from the Walmart-Funded Mental Health Initiative Grantees](#)

We are inspired by the Walmart grantees' progress on mental health focused initiatives in their communities. From developing new partnerships, hosting events to increase access to care, and improving community understanding and reducing stigma around mental health, their work to date is impressive.

[Explore Grantee Mid-Year Highlights](#)


In **Asbury Park**, "The Art of Inclusion" brought families together to celebrate voices of people with autism, fostering connection and improving mental health through art and shared meals.



In **Livingston**, community members took part in Adult MHFA training, gaining valuable skills to recognize, respond and support those experiencing mental health challenges.



In **Woodlynne**, residents attended a public seminar led by mental health professionals to promote emotional well-being, coping strategies, and substance use prevention through open discussion and expert guidance.



In the **City of Plainfield**, completed a flag raising ceremony to acknowledge the city's and school districts' commitment to mental health and support for those affected by mental health challenges.



In **Wildwood Crest**, older adults participated in a gentle, chair-yoga and mindfulness class to promote physical fitness, stress relief, and well-being through breathwork, sound meditation, and journaling.



## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

## [Make your Town Age-Friendly using this Municipal Toolkit](#)

Ridgewood's "Building An Age-Friendly Community" **Toolkit** offers a step-by-step guide to building a community that supports older adults. It includes tools to assess your town's infrastructure, run listening sessions, and develop age-friendly goals around transportation, housing, social inclusion, and more.

➡ Use it to shape your MWC goals around livability for older adults and to engage seniors in local planning.



[View the Toolkit here](#)

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## [Guidelines for Responsible Storytelling](#)

This practical toolkit from the [Camden Coalition](#) includes customizable forms and scripts to ethically gather and share personal stories. It ensures storytellers understand how their words will be used and helps you avoid misuse of sensitive information.



➡ Use this when collecting testimonials for social media, newsletters, or grant reports, especially when featuring residents.

[View the Tool Here](#)

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## [Learn How the Arts Improve Health with this Podcast Episode](#)

In this powerful episode, Alyson Maier Lokuta of NJPAC discusses how the arts like singing, painting, and storytelling can reduce depression, improve school outcomes, and combat isolation. She also shares how NJPAC is partnering with hospitals and universities to prescribe arts as part of health care.

→ Use this episode to inspire arts-based wellness programming in your town, such as intergenerational craft circles, community music events, or journaling workshops.



[Listen to the Podcast Episode](#)

## [Use your County's Community Plans to Drive your MWC](#)

Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNAs), available through **New Jersey CHiPs**, provide critical insight into the top health issues affecting residents—such as chronic disease, food access, mental health, and social determinants.

Many counties and hospitals across New Jersey have already released updated **CHNAs for 2024–2025**, or are actively in the process of finalizing them now. These reports are a valuable tool to inform your MWC programming.

→ Use this data to align your wellness work with current health priorities, apply for grants, or partner with local hospitals working on implementation strategies.

[Find your Community's Data here](#)

## [Connect Families with the Children's System of Care \(CSOC\)](#)

CSOC provides behavioral and developmental services to youth under 21 including mobile crisis response, substance use counseling, and support for intellectual/developmental disabilities. The website includes family-friendly brochures, program overviews, and service directories.

→ Share at school wellness nights, add to your town website, or distribute at community events and libraries.

[Family Friendly Mental Health Resources](#)

## Spread Community Awareness of Kidney Health & Type 2 Diabetes with these Educational Tools

Many residents with type 2 diabetes are unaware they're at risk for chronic kidney disease (CKD). Early testing and education can make a big difference.

*Share these simple, printable tools at local events, municipal buildings, or online:*

- [Doctor Discussion Guide](#): Encourages conversations about CKD testing
- [Patient Brochure](#): Explains CKD risks and prevention in clear, accessible language

➡ *Easy-to-use materials that support early detection and healthier communities.*



### FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

## Apply Now: SJIPH Community Health Research Grants

The **South Jersey Institute for Population Health (SJIPH)** is offering grants of **\$25,000–\$100,000** for collaborative research projects addressing health disparities in South Jersey.

**Must include** a Rutgers–Camden or Rowan faculty partner and a CBO in: Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, Cumberland, Salem, Atlantic, or Cape May.

**LOI Deadline:** July 14, 2025 [Details + Apply](#)

## Strengthen your Initiatives with a Grant from the Community Fund for NJ

The Community Fund for New Jersey is offering several grant opportunities to support a wide range of community-focused initiatives. Enhance your MWC programs with potential funding through these versatile grants.

[Explore Opportunities](#)



#### More Information:

Mayors Wellness Campaign: Katie Bisaha - [kbisaha@njhcqi.org](mailto:kbisaha@njhcqi.org).

Become a Member: Virginia Tesser - [vtesser@njhcqi.org](mailto:vtesser@njhcqi.org).

To learn more about our current initiatives, please visit our website at [www.njhcqi.org](http://www.njhcqi.org).

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