

**Governor Corzine, Commissioner Howard Visit Henry J. Austin Health Center; \$5 Million Investment in Health Care Safety Net to Hire Staff, Expand Services**



Trenton—Governor Jon S. Corzine joined Health and Senior Services Commissioner Heather Howard today for the announcement of \$5 million in grants to help community health centers hire staff, extend hours and expand access to prenatal and primary care.

“During this time of economic crisis, it is imperative that we protect our health care safety net,” said Governor Corzine. “Federally Qualified Health Centers are the perfect example of the types of facilities and institutions we as a nation *must* leverage during this recession: ready-to-go programs with already-established systems of delivering low-cost services to our most vulnerable —the unemployed, the uninsured and people who need medical care.”

Health and Senior Services Commissioner Heather Howard said priority for the funds was given to expanding access to prenatal care by increasing the number of obstetricians and nurse midwives and strengthening the health care safety net in medically underserved areas.

“Expanding access to prenatal and primary care during these difficult economic times is more important now than ever before,” Commissioner Howard said. “This funding will improve services in critical areas where hospitals have closed and it will help ensure that women have healthy babies.”

Sixteen community health centers will receive grants ranging from \$153,600 to \$644,250 to hire OB/GYNs, nurse midwives and support staff; buy equipment or expand hours on weeknight evenings and weekends. The average grant is \$250,000

The Henry J. Austin Health Center at Ewing Street, where the grants were announced, will use its \$255,600 grant to hire an OB/GYN, buy an ultrasound machine, and add five staff to operate a call center for patients seeking medical appointments.

Walter Isaacs, chief executive officer of the Henry J. Austin Health Center, said the funding will "help us meet the existing demand and strengthen our OB/GYN services." The health center handled prenatal care and deliveries for 307 babies last year and is seeing more prenatal care patients than ever before, Isaacs said.

The North Hudson Community Action Corp., which provides primary care at eight locations in Bergen, Passaic and Hudson counties, will use its \$450,000 grant to renovate space and purchase equipment for its Hackensack site and to expand hours to include Sundays and evening hours four nights a week at its West New York site. The Horizon Health Center in Jersey City will use its \$298,468 grant to staff a satellite facility in Bayonne, where a prenatal clinic closed in June of 2006.

"These expansion dollars will help to increase services, sites, and providers who serve the most needy in our state," said Katherine Grant-Davis, President and CEO of the New Jersey Primary Care Association. "We are acutely aware of the budget issues facing this state, rising unemployment- rising numbers of uninsured- closure of hospitals, and the general economic downturn. That is why the awarding of grant dollars to the Federally Qualified Health Centers is so extraordinary in this day and time."

More than 300,000 patients received care in community health centers last year, and visits are expected to increase between 3 and 4 percent because of the economic downturn. The 20 centers, with a total of 90 sites, provide primary and preventive health services to patients who are either uninsured, enrolled in FamilyCare or recipients of Medicaid and Medicare.

Today's announcement at the Henry J. Austin Health Center is part of Commissioner Howard's ongoing campaign to raise awareness of the importance of preconception and prenatal health. Since the campaign began last October, Commissioner Howard has visited health centers, Women, Infants and Children clinics, college campuses and a community baby shower to urge women to maintain a healthy lifestyle before, during and in between pregnancies.

The centers that received expansion funding are:

- Camcare, \$303,776 to hire staff and buy medical equipment and supplies for a new site, HOPE VI in southern Camden
- Eric B. Chandler in New Brunswick, \$251,880 for equipment
- Community Health Care in Cumberland County, \$240,526 to expand women's services at four sites.

- Henry J. Austin Health Center in Trenton, \$255,600 to expand OB/GYN services and hire staff to operate a call center for patients seeking appointments
- Horizon Health Center in Jersey City, \$298,468 to staff a satellite facility in Bayonne, where a prenatal clinic closed in June of 2006.
- Jewish Renaissance in Perth Amboy, \$276,742 to hire a dentist and hygienist and to buy a new ultrasound system
- Metropolitan Family Health Network in Jersey City, \$266,700 to hire an OB/GYN and nurse midwife.
- Monmouth Family Health Center, \$275,000 for renovations and dental supplies
- Newark Community Health Center, \$365,400 to hire an OB/GYN, nurse midwife and expand OB/GYN services
- Neighborhood Health Services Corp. in Plainfield, \$644,250 to ensure access to a medically underserved population affected by the closing of their community hospital
- North Hudson Community Action Center, \$450,000 for salaries, equipment, renovations and program expenses for its Hackensack site.
- Ocean Health Initiatives, \$200,000 for expansion services to seniors in Manchester and Lacey Township
- Paterson Community Health Center, \$153,625 to fund an outreach manager and workers
- Southern Jersey Family Medical Centers in Hammonton, \$240,000 to expand OB/GYN services
- Visiting Nurse Association of Central Jersey, \$176,154, to fund nurse midwife consultants, hire an outreach worker and buy medical supplies
- Zufall Health Center in Dover, \$200,000 to make renovations to their new satellite in Morristown.