



# UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

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Newark, New Jersey

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## MEDIA CONTACT

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### **University Hospital Announces Innovative Community Health Program**

*New program will utilize chaplains in the role of community healthcare workers to improve the health of Newark residents*

**Newark, New Jersey** – Today, University Hospital (UH) announced the launch of an innovative community-based care coordination program. The Community Health Program, led by the hospital, will leverage and expand existing partnerships with the Greater Newark Healthcare Coalition, the Healthy Greater Newark Accountable Care Organization, Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, and Rutgers University Behavioral Healthcare, among others. The new initiative will seek to improve health outcomes for Newark residents, lessen dependency on emergency services as a primary resource for medical attention, and improve access to primary care services.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** “New Jersey is committed to building healthy, thriving communities. I applaud University Hospital for taking this step forward to improve the health and quality of life for the people of Newark and for recognizing that our health is largely impacted by life’s challenges that occur outside the four walls of a hospital or doctor’s office. Through this comprehensive approach we are making a commitment to not only acknowledge and address the medical needs of an individual but the complicating social factors in their lives, to ultimately improve both health and quality of life.”

**Shereef Elnahal, Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Health:** “I commend University Hospital for engaging the city’s health care partners and trained chaplains to work together to improve residents’ access to primary care and social services. This new pilot encompasses the core tenets of quality improvement in health care – evidence-based, collaborative, data-driven and considerate of the community and cultural environment that surrounds our patients.”

The Community Health Program is part of University Hospital’s strategy to create a “whole person,” relationship-based approach to health education and treatment in the Newark community. The first phase of this program will focus on the hospital’s high utilizers of emergency services and will kick off with a pilot to implement the relationship-based “Familiar Faces” model.

The “Familiar Faces” model was originally developed by Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare’s Center of Excellence in Faith and Health in Memphis, Tennessee, and utilizes trained chaplains in the role of a Community Healthcare Worker. University Hospital will combine this program with the learnings from the ImPact model developed by the Penn Center for Community Healthcare Workers to lay the foundation for a first-class community health program in the Newark community.

As part of the program, two recently hired University Hospital chaplains will act as health and spiritual coaches, healthy lifestyle mentors, and liaisons between patients and the hospital. The chaplains will function in a non-denominational spiritual role, not restricted to any specific religion. They will work to establish a mutual rapport and trust with patients in order to identify the unique concerns and needs of each individual patient and establish better communication with their healthcare professionals. This will allow for better access to personalized high-quality care, social services, behavioral health care, and other resources.

**Ras J. Baraka, Mayor of Newark:** “Newark residents who now depend on the emergency room for ordinary health services will benefit from a program that will reduce their dependence on emergency rooms while promoting preventative care. The involvement of clergy as liaisons between residents and doctors will help ensure that the voices are heard and their medical needs met.”

**Judith Persichilli, Acting President & CEO, University Hospital:** “University Hospital is excited to launch this community health initiative, which marks the beginning of an unprecedented collaboration between Newark’s major healthcare providers and community-based organizations to provide holistic care to the Newark community. By connecting our patients with community healthcare resources and providing them with a high-touch, people-centered approach, we hope to reduce the number of people seeking emergency services for complications that can be managed or prevented at home. Most importantly, we hope to further develop the trust of Newark residents in the care we provide so that they know they can rely on us for support in their everyday lives.”

The new Community Health Program will utilize the latest technology to provide real-time care for these patients to link and match community services throughout Newark to client social needs, exchange data across providers in the city, and facilitate effective patient transport to and from appointments.

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### **About University Hospital**

University Hospital is one of the nation's leading academic medical centers, and is the Level 1 Trauma Center for Northern New Jersey. Located at University Heights in Newark, University Hospital is a principal teaching hospital of Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences and a regional resource for advanced services across many medical specialties. For more information about University Hospital, please visit [www.uhnj.org](http://www.uhnj.org).