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TRENTON HEALTH TEAM IS JOINED BY MAYOR JACKSON IN PRESENTING GRANT AWARDS TO FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS FOR PROGRAMMING TO IMPROVE HEALTH

(TRENTON, NJ) – Mayor Eric Jackson joined the Trenton Health Team today in presenting grants to seven churches and faith-based organizations to implement activities and educational programming to promote healthy eating and physical activity. The awards represent the first round of funding by THT made possible through its ‘Faith in Prevention’ grant from the New Jersey Department of Health.

“Health is a priority for planning and policy within my administration,” said Mayor Jackson, who is working to implement a “health in all policies” approach for the City, having included health as a focus within the Trenton250 Master Plan. “We count the faith community as true partners in our efforts to improve health outcomes for Trenton, helping to increase knowledge, access, and hope for our citizens.”

In a city where 39 percent of the residents are deemed obese and 16 percent suffer from diabetes, the focus is on getting and staying healthy by creating a partnership between the city’s healthcare collaborative and the faith community.

“Through this program, we are encouraging community residents to take ownership of their health and well-being,” said James Brownlee, director of the Department of Health and Human Services and Health Officer for the City of Trenton, who also serves as THT’s president. Mr. Brownlee plays a leadership role in implementing THT’s Community Health Improvement Plan, which was developed and adopted through a city-wide partnership of healthcare, governmental, behavioral and social service agencies plus the faith community.

“Faith-based organizations play a vital role in caring for the sick and vulnerable,” said Gregory Paulson, deputy director of THT. “Through this program, their role is being recognized and supported in a way that amplifies our efforts to address priority health concerns for the city, including health literacy, obesity and healthy lifestyles, and chronic disease.”

THT is currently working with 10 faith-based organizations to implement the education and prevention program funded by the State. Churches are deploying the evidence-based “Faithful Families Eating Smart and Moving More” curriculum. Seven churches completed the application process and are receiving grants ranging from \$3,500 to \$8,500. They are:

- Cadwalader Asbury United Methodist Church
- The Church of the Blessed Sacrament – Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd
- *El Centro* of Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton
- St. Vladimir Orthodox Christian Church

- Shiloh Baptist Church
- Trinity Episcopal Cathedral
- Westminster Presbyterian Church

As additional churches begin the program, THT expects to make another round of grants for a cumulative total of \$62,000 to support their participation.

Grant funds are used to underwrite programs encouraging people to eat healthy foods and increase physical activity, including exercise classes and the establishment of church gardens. Groups involved in the program start with a self-assessment to determine the needs and interests of their congregation and community.

“These faith-based programs will help us expand on our community connections, building awareness and participation in nutrition and active lifestyle programs that will be delivered through the infrastructure of a trusted and established resource: the community’s churches and faith-based organizations,” said Paulson. “We look forward to an ongoing partnership with the city’s churches and congregations that will advance our shared mission of healing and health for the community.”

About the Trenton Health Team

Trenton Health Team (THT) is an alliance of the city's major providers of healthcare services including Capital Health, St. Francis Medical Center, Henry J. Austin Health Center and the city's Health Department. In collaboration with residents and the city’s active social services network, THT is developing an integrated healthcare delivery system to transform the city’s fragmented primary care system and restore health to the city. The THT receives generous support from The Nicholson Foundation, corporate partners and other foundations. For more information, visit www.trentonhealthteam.org.

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