




# GMPHP NEWSLETTER

CELEBRATING OUR NEWS AND YOUR STORIES

## CELEBRATING 10 YEARS!

### CREATING A CULTURE OF INNOVATION

by Carol Nicholas

In 2011, four Mercer County hospitals, Mercer County Human Services, and 8 health departments started meeting to form a partnership to improve the health of Mercer County residents. Now 10 year later, we are in the throws of our fourth collaborative **Community Health Assessment and Improvement Plan**. This partnership grew from a few people to over 150 area non-profits and volunteers interested in exploring best practices around the country that worked to improve health. Working together, several pilot programs were started, and many collaborations occurred due to the group meetings and sharing of services and resources. The Covid-19 pandemic hit hard in Mercer County, but because the non-profits were already connected with each other, programs were able to pivot and meet the needs of our residents. In a recent meeting with Connie Mercer from HomeFront, she mentioned that there was a good supply of food for our residents, and no family will go hungry due to hardships from COVID-19.

As we continue to study the effects of Covid-19 in our County during the Community Health Assessment 2021, we look forward to sharing the data, with you, and working together to form a new innovative Community Health Improvement Plan for 2022-25. For more information on becoming a part of these initiatives, contact Carol at [gmpHP.nj@gmail.com](mailto:gmpHP.nj@gmail.com)

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As you know, GMPHP is conducting the **Community Health Assessment 2021**, and has hired **35 Street Consulting** to lead the project. Grace Gorenflo is helping with the Key Informant Survey and is encouraging all of our partners to participate. Grace writes:

### Turn, Turn, Turn

As immortalized in song by The Byrds, "To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven." When it comes to COVID-19, what is this season? What is this time's purpose? As we begin to focus on recovery, is it time to laugh and dance? As the nation is faced with outbreaks of the delta strain, is it time to weep and mourn? The simple answer? Yes and....

It is time both to develop a better, new "normal" AND to plan ahead. It is a time to rejoice that our communities have banded together to address the unthinkable disparities that exist in different populations throughout the county AND prepare to mobilize services and support again in the weeks to come.

It is the season of recognizing that our community's health is dependent on safe and affordable housing, accessible and nutritious food, and strong social connections. Now is the time to commit to the purpose of always tending to these upstream determinants of health as a key strategy to improving health for all in Mercer County.

What have you seen and what do you hope for in this season? Please share your voice and perspective through the Key Informant Survey.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GMPHP2021>

Email Carol if you have any questions regarding the survey.

[gmpHP.nj@gmail.com](mailto:gmpHP.nj@gmail.com)



## FREE PRESENTATIONS FOR YOUR STAFF AND CONSUMERS

All of our presentations are customizable to fit your unique needs. Topics Include:

1. Booze, Brains & Babies: A Closer Look at Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders
2. Connecting Through Compassion
3. Healthy Families/Children of Substance Abuse
4. The Keys to Loving Relationships: Locking Out Causes of Domestic Violence
5. The Opioid Epidemic- Heroin and Prescription Drugs
6. Understanding the Impact Substances have on the Body, Brain and Heart
7. Getting Smart: The Little Known Dangers of 2nd & 3rd Hand Smoke
8. Knowledge is Power: Getting the Facts about Tobacco, Vaping and Ecigarettes
9. Substance Use Facilitated Sexual Assault
10. The Impact of Marijuana on Pregnancy & Breastfeeding
11. Addressing Unconscious Bias & Judgement \*We also offer a free, 4-6 week Smoking Cessation Program with flexible scheduling.

For more information, please contact:

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## Farewell to Two GMPHP Volunteers

The GMPHP said farewell to two Board members who recently retired in June. Carol Chamberlain and Jane Millner, were both founding members of the GMPHP and helped develop the foundation of our nonprofit over the last 10 years. We thank you for your dedicated service, and will miss you both. Happy retirement!



## Did a Ban Increase Teen Smoking?



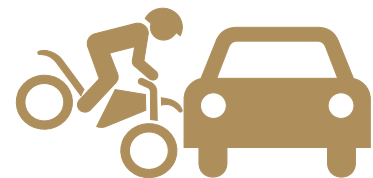
A ban on flavored vaping products in San Francisco may have increased high school students' use of conventional cigarettes, according to a new study. In 2018, voters in the city approved a ballot measure banning the sale of flavored tobacco products. An analysis of 2011-2019 data on high school students younger than 18 found that before the ban was implemented, past 30-day smoking rates in San Francisco and comparison school districts were similar and declining. The study showed San Francisco's school district high school students smoking conventional cigarettes doubled compared to districts without such a ban, even when the researchers adjusted for individual demographics and other tobacco policies, according to the Yale School of Public Health study. The findings were published May 24 in the journal JAMA Pediatrics.

## FOUR FEET TO PASS...

A new law requiring drivers to allow four feet when passing people walking, running, and biking passed the state Assembly Law and Public Safety committee and it is now heading to the Assembly Speaker.

According to **CAB member Sonia Szczesna from the Tri-State Transportation Campaign**, the law will require drivers to approach and pass protected road users with "due caution." The definition of "due caution" focuses on slowing down and giving the other user plenty of space when passing:

- If at all possible, the driver should change into a non-adjacent lane before getting closer than four feet.
- If those options are not possible, the driver must reduce their speed to 25 miles per hour and be prepared to stop.



## STAFF DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders (PMADs) affect approximately 20% of new mothers and 10% of new fathers during the first year postpartum. PMADs affect the ability to parent effectively and have been shown to have long-term effects on the cognitive development of infants. The staff of the Perinatal Mood Disorders Initiative at Central Jersey Family Health Consortium is available to educate your staff and the clients you serve. Contact Kathy Donaldson, Program Coordinator, at [kdonaldson@CJFHC.org](mailto:kdonaldson@CJFHC.org) if you want more information or to schedule education.

## SPOTLIGHT ON OUR PARTNER...

### HUNTERDON/MERCER CHRONIC DISEASE COALITION

There are over 16 million cancer survivors today, with 22.1 million expected by 2030 according to the American Cancer Society. Great strides in early detection and more effective treatments due to better understanding of the biology of cancer have improved survival and patient outcomes. Given the extended survival for most cancer patients, as well as, comorbidities acquired from treatment and aging, cancer survivors will need long term follow up care strategies that includes management of post-treatment symptoms, disease prevention and health promotion. Survivors often face physical, emotional, social and financial challenges as a result of their cancer diagnosis and treatment.

"The goal of survivorship care is to empower patients to achieve their best possible health outcome. This involves providing knowledge, guidance and support to survivors and their families in relation to healthy lifestyle and disease prevention and control. Self-management of the effects of cancer is a critical component in maintaining a good quality of life for survivors and the aim of the evidence-based program Cancer Thriving & Surviving," stated **CAB member Bonnie Petrauskas**, a certified peer leader for the workshop.

The 6-week Cancer Thriving & Surviving Workshop focuses on developing self-management skills to build survivors/caregivers confidence in their ability to manage their health and maintain an active and fulfilling life. Approximately 1 in 4 cancer survivors report a decreased quality of life due to physical problems and 1 in 10 due to emotional problems. This evidence-based program offers an interface between physical health and mental health with attention not only on disease surveillance and pain management but also anxiety, nutrition and physical activity as important issues. It offers anyone impacted by cancer, including caregivers, self-management tools to maximize long term outcomes. As the population of cancer survivors grows, it will become increasingly essential to optimize health care delivery and long term outcomes among survivors and their caregivers.

**There are 2 workshops (virtual format) scheduled to be held in the fall 2021: an evening program (6-8 pm) starting on September 30 and a morning program (10:30am – 12:30 pm) starting on October 6. For more information about registration call 908-237-2328.**



**Bonnie Petrauskas**

## CANCER THRIVING & SURVIVING

A WORKSHOP DESIGNED FOR ADULTS AND CAREGIVERS IMPACTED BY CANCER

CHALLENGES TO THRIVING

Enroll now in a  
free online 6-week  
workshop in  
self-management  
proven to better  
manage challenges  
to thriving



## FRESH PRODUCE TO QUALIFYING OLDER ADULTS

Mercer County Executive Brian M. Hughes announced that older adults in Mercer County again will have the opportunity to receive fresh-produce checks that will enable them to purchase locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables at participating farm stands.

In order to keep older adults and their families safe during this pandemic, the staff from the Mercer County Office on Aging have had to change the process for receiving checks. Please call 609-989-6661 and speak with a staff member or leave a message with your phone number so the Office on Aging can return the call. This year each person will receive five \$6 checks for a total \$30 and are valid until Nov. 30, 2021. Checks will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis.

**Healthy food for our seniors was one of the 2019 Community Health Improvement Plan goals.**



## Eviction and Foreclosure Moratorium



If you have an FHA insured mortgage, there is a federal foreclosure and eviction moratorium (or stop) in effect through June 30, 2021. If your mortgage is insured by Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac or a federal agency like VA or USDA, you may be entitled to protection from foreclosure and eviction. Please visit CFPB's mortgage and housing assistance webpage for more details. Some states and local governments have also temporarily stopped foreclosures. This means that if your loan is not federally insured or backed, you could still be protected from foreclosure. Check your state's website for details.

## SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL GRANTS - DUE OCTOBER 14TH

SRTS grants are available for infrastructure projects that encourage and enable **K-8 students to walk and bike safely to school**. Proposed project improvements must be within a two-mile radius of a K-8 school. SRTS facilitates the planning, development and implementation of projects that improve safety and air quality, as well as reduce traffic and fuel consumption around schools. **Safe Routes to School is one of the initiatives in our 2019 Community Health Improvement Plan.** For more information:

**<https://www.saferoutesnj.org/grants-funding-overview/>**



## TWO LOCAL GROUPS WIN GOLD !



Every year, the New Jersey Safe Routes Resource Center recognizes municipalities and schools (public, private, or charter) for their commitment to the Safe Routes program. Nominees are asked to apply for recognition at one of four levels: First Step, Bronze, Silver, or Gold. This year, Community Park School and the Borough of Hightstown both achieved the Gold level of excellence recognition. Congratulations!

**Safe Routes is a part of the 2019 Community Health Improvement Plan**

## Six-Month Utility Shutoff Grace Period Announced

No one will face a gas, water, or electric utility disconnection before December 31st, 2021. The formal moratorium on gas, electric, and water utility shutoffs will end on July 1st, 2021 with a grace period that will run through December 31st, 2021. This period is for customers to enroll in payment assistance plans.

Visit the COVID-19 Information Hub for more information on programs that help you pay your utility bills or arrears.



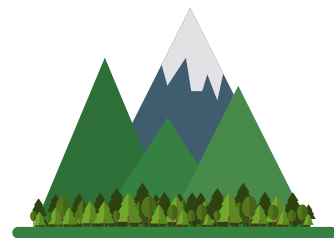
## Adult Medical Daycare Centers Reopened

Effective May 28th, adult medical daycare centers can reopen while following Department of Health safety protocols. These facilities will need to attest to satisfying the guidance requirements to ensure the centers can be opened safely. If all participants and staff are fully vaccinated, physical distancing and group size requirements do not need to be maintained.



## Get Your State Parks Vax Pass

If you are fully vaccinated or receive your first shot by July 4th, you can receive a free season "State Parks Vax Pass," good for entrance at any State park for the rest of 2021. Go to [nj.gov/vaxandvisit](https://nj.gov/vaxandvisit) to learn more and register for your State Parks Vax Pass. Once you receive an email with your pass, you can enter any State park free of charge.



## Community Pop-Up Vaccination Events

Visit the COVID-19 community calendar to find events near you, including pop-up vaccination sites and clinics. The calendar will be regularly updated with opportunities to get vaccinated in your community, no appointment needed. Organizations can also submit upcoming events related to COVID-19 vaccination such as virtual town halls.

<https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/communitycalendartest>



## PROTECTING YOU PROTECTING ME

CAB member **Mercer Council on Alcoholism and Drug Addiction** offers a free evidence-based prevention program for children on the dangers of underage drinking. Protecting You, Protecting Me (PYPM) is an alcohol use prevention program developed by Mothers Against Drunk Driving. It is intended for students in grades K-5 and consists of eight, 40-minute lessons on a variety of topics including our brain, growth and development, health and safety, choices and decisions, media awareness, and communication and vehicle safety. PYPM is of no cost to schools and all materials are provided by the council. We are now scheduling for Fall 2021! Please contact PYPM Program Coordinator, Vanessa DeRosa, at [vderosa@mercercouncil.org](mailto:vderosa@mercercouncil.org) or (609) 396-5874 Ext. 210 to schedule the program.



Vanessa DeRosa promoting health and safety at Rider's Health Kids Day

## FITNESS REDISCOVERED

The Better Health Program, a no-fee specialty wellness program for members age 65 and up offered by **CAB member Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton**, recently received a grant from Janssen Pharmaceuticals. This innovative program is the first in the region and will enhance the wellness of seniors in our community. This program offers a free, personalized, small group, 8-week fitness program with a personal trainer and coach. This "Fitness Rediscovered" program will be offered at RWJ Fitness & Wellness, 3100 Quakerbridge Road, Mercerville.

"Fitness Rediscovered" is an evidence-based wellness program created with guidance from healthcare providers and patients to meet each participant's individual wellness needs. As part of the program, each participant receives a biometric assessment by a nurse, a personalized exercise plan, vital sign monitoring, and supervision by certified fitness professionals in a fun and safe environment. During every class, participants will enjoy an engaging experience designed to help improve movement, balance and heart health, healthy eating techniques and so much more all led by a highly-qualified trainers, dietitian and community health educators.

In order to participate, applicants for the "Fitness Rediscovered" program must be a member of the Better Health program. Join, online at [rwjbh.org/betterhealthhamilton](http://rwjbh.org/betterhealthhamilton) or by picking up an application at RWJ Fitness & Wellness. **This initiative helps to meet the GMPHP Community Health Improvement goal to help residents have a healthy weight.**



Rediscover your Mind, Body, & Spirit in Retirement  
**Better Health Program**  
Complimentary Membership at 65+ years old





# 1st Annual JFCS **for MEALS**

Sunday Morning, October 3, 2021

Find all the information on  
[JFCSWheels4Meals.org](http://JFCSWheels4Meals.org)

Join us at the..  
**1st Annual  
JFCS Wheels for Meals**  
*Bike Ride Fundraiser*

Sunday, October 3, 2021  
Mercer County Community College,  
West Windsor, NJ



## FREE PROGRAMS FOR SCHOOLS

For over forty years, Mercer Council has been providing evidence-based prevention education programs throughout Mercer County. Our mission is to create pathways to reduce substance-related challenges through education, support, advocacy, and partnerships throughout our community. We offer a middle school program called Botvin Life Skills Training (LST) developed by Dr. Gilbert J. Botvin at Cornell University

Medical College. LST is a researched, evidence based prevention curriculum that focuses on drug, alcohol, and tobacco prevention. It also focuses on the many issues adolescents face today. Topics discussed include how to be an effective communicator, peer relationships, social skills, and coping with stress, anxiety, and anger, just to name a few. If you are interested in implementing the LST prevention curriculum, please contact us at [aargiriou@mercercouncil.org](mailto:aargiriou@mercercouncil.org).

## Empowering (You)th

- Peer pressure- from media and substance use
- Trauma informed concerns
- How to make them feel safe and foster their best decision-making abilities

**\*\* Any and All Questions Welcome! \*\***

**Chance to win a \$25 Gift Card for Participants, 1 Winner Each Week!!!**

ZOOM Meeting Link:

YouTube Channel With Our Recorded Zooms:



**WHEN:**  
12:00PM – 1:00PM  
THURSDAY'S

