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Mayor Fulop Announces that the Jersey City Healthy Communities 50 Collaborative Awarded \$10,000 in the HealthyCommunity50 Healthiest Cities and Counties Challenge

One of hundreds of entries selected to compete for up to \$500,000 in prizes through Aetna Foundation, American Public Health Association and National Association of Counties partnership

JERSEY CITY – Mayor Steven M. Fulop, in collaboration with the Jersey City Department of Health and Human Services, CarePoint Health, the Jersey City Medical Center-RWJBarnabas Health, Saint Peter’s University, the Jersey City Anti Violence Coalition Movement & Kings Knight Chess Club, Inc., has been identified to receive a \$10,000 community seed award from the HealthyCommunity50 Healthiest Cities & Counties Challenge. This Jersey City based HealthyCommunity50 Collaborative is one of 50 organizations nation-wide awarded for work toward making measurable change in their local communities. By participating in the Challenge, Mayor Fulop and the Jersey City Collaborative are in the running to receive additional grant awards that will support local Jersey City healthy programming.

The Challenge, a partnership between the Aetna Foundation, the American Public Health Association and the National Association of Counties, launched in April during National Public Health Week. The Challenge will award \$1.5 million in prizes to small and mid-sized cities, counties and federally-recognized tribes that are able to show measurable change over the course of several years working with cross-sector partnerships to implement health innovations and data-driven solutions. Hundreds of city governments, local municipalities, health departments, educational institutions and other public/private entities applied to be a part of the Challenge.

The HealthyCommunity50 were chosen based on plans to improve the health of their communities in at least one of five domains: Healthy behaviors, community safety, built environment, social/economic factors and environmental exposures.

“I am thrilled that the Jersey City HealthyCommunity50 Collaborative was selected to receive grant dollars to enhance the meaningful work we’re doing to increase health and develop strong partnerships to combat health disparities that plague cities like ours,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “This award serves to expand and enhance the commitment we’ve made to make Jersey City a healthier community and it further validates the work of our outstanding partners in health.”

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Through the Challenge, Jersey City Mayor Fulop, Jersey City Department of Health and Human Services, CarePoint Health, the Jersey City Medical Center-RWJBarnabas Health, Saint Peter's University, the Jersey City Anti Violence Coalition Movement & Kings Knight Chess Club, Inc., will address community violence as a health issue by providing evidence-based programming that empowers youth to develop healthy mind, spirit and body. The project comes at a critical time for the City of Jersey City where nearly 1 in 3 children grow up in poverty and youth are adversely impacted by the prevalence of criminal gangs and violence. The "Mind/Body/Spirit" project is modeled after the evidence-based "Communities That Care" program, which has received a Blueprint Program Rating of "Promising" from the Blueprint for Healthy Youth Development.

According to the Blueprint for Healthy Youth Development, Communities That Care:

"is a prevention system, grounded in science that gives communities the tools to address their adolescent health and behavior problems through a focus on empirically identified risk and protective factors. CTC provides a structure for engaging community stakeholders, a process for establishing a shared community vision, tools for assessing levels of risk and protection in communities, and processes for prioritizing risk and protective factors and setting specific, measurable, community goals. CTC guides the coalition to create a strategic community prevention plan designed to address the community's profile of risk and protection with tested, effective programs and to implement the chosen programs with fidelity. CTC instructs the coalition to monitor program implementation and to periodically reevaluate community levels of risk and protection and outcomes, and to make adjustments in prevention programming if indicated by the data. Implementation of CTC is organized into five stages, each with its own series of "benchmarks" and "milestones" to help guide and monitor implementation progress. CTC is installed in communities through a series of six training events delivered over the course of 6 to 12 months by certified CTC trainers."

"At the Aetna Foundation, we're seeking to reward innovation for communities implementing new ways to improve health outcomes," said **Dr. Garth Graham, president of the Aetna Foundation**. "We want the Healthiest Cities & Counties Challenge to serve as a catalyst for collaboration in local communities around the country working to move the needle in combating health disparities."

All selected HealthyCommunity50 members will be visited by an expert judge panel to answer questions, understand the community's approach to the project first-hand and speak with the members of the cross-sector team and key stakeholders. At the conclusion of the Challenge, the programs most able to show measurable change will be eligible for prize awards from \$25,000 - \$500,000. Participants will be judged on their own progress and will not be competing against each other. For more information, visit www.healthiestcities.org.

To view the HealthyCommunity50 promotional video, highlighting the 50 communities, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKMH4mUzDps&feature=youtu.be>

For information on this, and other programs coordinated by the Jersey City Department of Health & Human Services, please call (201) 547-6800. Or, follow us on Twitter @HealthierJC

All media inquiries should be directed to Jennifer Morrill, Press Secretary to Mayor Steven M. Fulop at [201-547-4836](tel:201-547-4836) or [201-376-0699](tel:201-376-0699). ////