



TRENTON  
HEALTH  
TEAM



# For a Healthy Trenton

Trenton Health Team is committed to ensuring everyone has access to health care while also addressing societal factors such as food, housing, jobs, and safety.



# Understanding Trenton's Health Gap



## Letter from Cheryl Towns, BSN, RN

Chief Community Care Officer, Trenton Health Team

As the leader of Trenton Health Team's work in the community, I'm proud to serve in ways that make a real difference — to individuals, to the people who support them, and to the community as a whole. Trenton

Health Team is the glue that helps everyone work for a healthy Trenton.

My team works with people who are like themselves, people who are caught in the middle, people who work every day, who don't have money or time to address important issues, like making doctor's appointments, refilling medications, understanding rights for kids in school, or taking steps to improve their earning power.

Say you have hypertension and you're not taking your medication because the doctor won't refill it until you get blood work done and a new appointment. You can't get that appointment for another few months. You end up going to the ER with a complication.

Or, imagine you couldn't take your child to get the needed immunizations so they can no longer go to school, now you can't go to work because you have to find someone to watch your kids.

We help individuals take steps to improve their situation. And Trenton Health Team helps anyone, no matter their circumstance.

In 2025, the City of Trenton was awarded the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health Prize, reflecting the collaborative work taking place across Trenton. Trenton Health Team led the application on behalf of the community, in partnership with Capital Health.





**Trenton is a vibrant, complex working city** where many people are working multiple jobs, caring for relatives, relying on shared transportation, negotiating with landlords and raising their families. More than 30% of the community speaks a language other than English at home and the median income is 45% of the New Jersey average. In this context, making choices that maximize health and well-being and accessing clinical care can present residents with overwhelming challenges. Support systems don't always work as they should.

Trenton's residents face obstacles in accessing essential services. Area hospitals and clinics are overburdened, and disease rates run high. However, Trenton remains resilient, and Trenton Health Team, banding together with community partners, creates practical, data-backed solutions to help close Trenton's health gap.

## Vision For a Healthy Trenton

Along with our partners in the community and within healthcare institutions, we understand that health and well-being are inextricably linked to housing quality, food security, neighborhood safety, education, and nurturing environments.

**Join Us  
In Pursuing  
Our Vision**

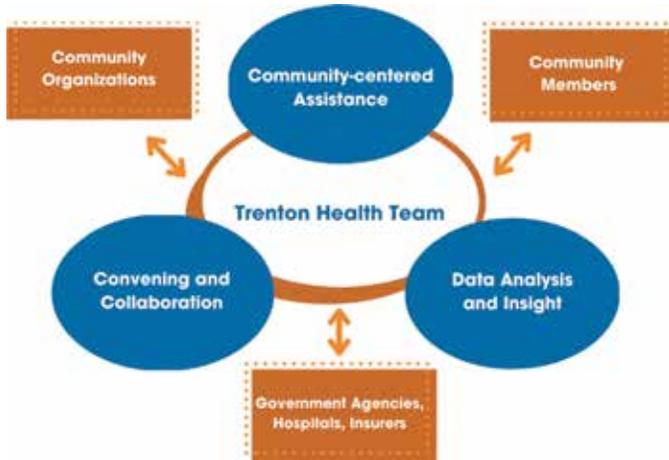
**Our shared vision incorporates these social determinants of health, defining a "healthy Trenton":**

-  > A healthy environment and housing
-  > Vibrant public spaces
-  > A growing economy
-  > Effective education
-  > Healthy food
-  > Safety
-  > Social cohesion
-  > Quality healthcare





## Bridging Community and Systems: Trenton Health Team's Role



In Trenton's complex environment, there is an acute need for direct support for individuals to access the services they need, as well as a need for data-driven insight to identify where and why systems fail, and how systems can be changed to improve health and well being. Trenton Health Team fills these needs, creating a bridge between community members' lived experience and the policies and practices created by larger entities that provide services.



### Trenton Health Team works in three interdependent ways:

**1** | THT employs, supports and deploys people with lived experience in the Trenton community to work with individuals and community groups, assessing health care needs and helping residents learn how to care for — and advocate for — themselves.

*Community health workers relate personally to their clients' experiences... they can help with a first step: a temporary prescription, emergency food. Small steps make a big difference."*

—Cheryl Towns, THT Chief Community Care Officer

**2** | THT lends capacity to the web of organizations working on community health, through its work as a convenor, program manager, lead applicant for funding, and fiscal sponsor.

*"Convening is a core role of THT. If I need information about community-based work, or I need to be connected with anyone, I can reach out to THT."*

—Joan Healy, Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Mercer County

**3** | THT harnesses community experience combined with rigorous data analysis to help our partners to pinpoint gaps and barriers to service, and identify ways to improve service delivery and health systems.

*"If I needed to know what was happening in Trenton with our most marginalized communities, I would go to THT."*

—Amanda Medina-Forrester, Department of Health



*“Thanks to the collaborative efforts with Trenton Health Team, we’ve seen measurable improvements in addressing food insecurity in Mercer County. The data from the Mercer County food insecurity index has been pivotal in guiding our work and ensuring that we make a meaningful impact on the elderly and families we serve. Together, we are moving the needle on this critical issue.”*

—**Venetta Ellerbe**, CEO, Meal on Wheels of Mercer County

## Making an Impact on Health Outcomes in Trenton

Our work focuses on creating meaningful changes to community health indicators. We work with local partners to identify the most pressing areas where changes are needed, then gather momentum around that issue, using data to confirm what works.



### More than 1 in 10 Trenton residents experience food insecurity.

THT coordinates 30+ organizations working to publish a Food Security Map that provides hyperlocal guidance on the root causes of food insecurity. This brings more food to areas of greatest need and helps donated dollars go further.



### 40% of Trenton residents rely on Medicaid for health services.

THT’s Community Care team reaches out to potentially eligible residents and NJ FamilyCare Medicaid members. We help them enroll or re-enroll in coverage, using multiple languages.



### About 13% of adults in Trenton have diabetes, and half of these are not receiving medical care.

Early detection and preventive care are critical tools to reduce chronic disease such as diabetes and cancer. Our Community Care Team educates and supports individuals in taking diagnostic and preventive steps to improve their own health.



### 6.1% of Trenton children under 6 have elevated blood lead levels, compared to 1.9% statewide.

Our Community Care team connects young families to home assessments and prevents lead poisoning before it happens.

**YOU can help  
Trenton Health Team  
make an impact!**



Starting early in the pandemic in 2020, THT facilitated coordination among healthcare and public health agencies and supported the data-driven rollout of community-based testing and vaccination in Trenton and Mercer County.

**THT** is one of four **Regional Health Hubs, designated by the State of NJ in 2020 with the aim of improving care for Medicaid recipients by addressing fragmented systems to create an ecosystem of care.**

## Enduring Commitment to Community Health

Trenton Health Team has been serving Trenton since 2006, a unique response to a healthcare crisis spurred by the closure of Mercer Medical Center, and the product of the collaboration of competing partners and the city government. What began as an unlikely partnership among competitors has grown into a small but mighty organization consisting of about 40 staff members who are deeply rooted in the community we call home. We respond to the ever-changing and complex needs of Trenton by building unique partnerships, piloting new projects and ideas, and creating novel tools that help us and our partners improve health outcomes. In a city that is too often overlooked, we're proud to be the neighbor you can count on to build trusted relationships and a healthier, more just Trenton.

After nearly 20 years, we have grown to a team of around 40, learned how to work effectively in our community, and become a trusted partner to local organizations and state agencies. Today, Trenton Health Team is a fully independent non-profit with staff and leadership that reflects the community we serve.

# Support Us as We Work for a Healthy Trenton



## You can help us extend our impact through...

- › Supporting front line efforts to combat diabetes, cancer, TB, harm from substance use, maternal morbidity and many other health challenges
- › Allowing for flexible, creative responses to needs as they arise
- › Supporting the Trenton community through crises that impact health
- › Investing in data and technology to support system change



Support Trenton Health Team at [trentonhealthteam.org/donations](https://trentonhealthteam.org/donations)

We appreciate the opportunity to build relationships with those who want to connect more deeply with our work. To continue the conversation, please contact us at [development@trentonhealthteam.org](mailto:development@trentonhealthteam.org).



*"THT is deeply participant-centered and willing to do some things that other organizations are not. We appreciate the team's willingness to always listen and consider innovative projects. It's groundbreaking and radical to give us support wherever and whenever we need it... purely for the sake of helping people — not for the recognition. You accept and work with us for who we are — a band of misfits."*

—JC, Trenton Community Leader



*"Y'all went above and beyond for me. Kalisha (CHW) even helped me with gift cards to get stuff I needed for my family. There were times where I wasn't getting back to her, but she was making sure that she got in touch with me."*

—Tamara, Trenton resident



*"They helped to let me know where I stood and if I was ready to move forward with my home buying process. Without this help, there was no way I would be buying a house. I was tired of paying rent and having nothing to show for it. Thank you for making my dream come true!!!"*

—Toni, Trenton resident





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