



To: Honorable Members of the Assembly Budget Committee
From: Gregory Paulson, Executive Director, Trenton Health Team
Re: FY20 Budget Testimony
Date: March 27, 2019

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you this afternoon. The Trenton Health Team is an innovative multi-sector partnership dedicated to the health and well-being of the greater Trenton community. We were founded in 2005 by Trenton's healthcare delivery system, specifically Capital Health, St. Francis Medical Center, Henry J. Austin Health Center, and the City of Trenton's Department of Health and Human Services. Since then, our partnership has expanded to include even more healthcare organizations and more than 100 community-based and faith-based organizations that play a role in supporting our community's health and well-being. We are now an organization of 25 dedicated staff and a nearly \$4M annual budget.

We know our healthcare system is fragmented. In our professional and personal lives, it is likely that we have all experienced it. Hospitals and doctors try to provide the best care for their patients. Community organizations provide food, shelter, wellness services, and social supports for their clients. Residents try to support their families and neighbors. What brings it all together? How do we align and coordinate services for a better patient experience, improved outcomes, and efficiencies that reduce cost?

An innovative infrastructure to do just that was created in Trenton, Camden, and Newark under the NJ Medicaid ACO Demonstration Project, passed in 2011. While it was originally conceived as an "Accountable Care Organization," we, as well as our sister organization in Paterson, have evolved into Regional Health Hubs. We have become effective structures that integrate and align all the disconnected programs that are working to make our communities healthier, with a particular focus on our residents who receive healthcare coverage through Medicaid and often don't have access to the resources they need to be and stay healthy.

We applaud the state's support for local, community-based innovation, and we are encouraged by the Legislature's efforts to improve the delivery and quality of healthcare in New Jersey. In fact, New Jersey is rapidly becoming a national model for how communities can come together to tackle our shared health challenges.

As you consider the FY 2020 budget, we urge you to continue funding for the Regional Health Hub model in Trenton, Camden, Newark, and Paterson with a state appropriation of \$1.5 million. That continuing appropriation, which would represent the fourth consecutive year of level funding, will leverage a 1-for-1 Federal match and allow the State to expand upon the

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learnings of the Medicaid ACO Demonstration Project and formally designate the first four Regional Health Hubs in Trenton, Camden, Newark, and Paterson.

The Regional Health Hub model, developed in collaboration with the Department of Human Services and the Department of Health, will add the Paterson community (through the Health Coalition of Passaic County - Paterson) and expand the geography of the existing regional ACOs – for the same State dollars.

Each Hub provides a community-based structure for convening stakeholders and planning and executing population health interventions and maintains a regional view of their community and its population health. Data is at the foundation of our work, and we each leverage significant investment in regional Health Information Exchanges (HIE) so that we can put the technology to work in guiding decisions and actions related to population health improvement.

In Trenton, our HIE has grown to include more than 980 clinical users who can access millions of records for 573,000 patients in real time. The reporting functions of the HIE are being continuously enhanced to include analytics at both the macro (population) and micro (individual, disease category, age group, or other subset) levels. The Trenton HIE is one of the original six HIEs in New Jersey, and our full integration with the Camden HIE represented the first full integration of two of NJ's Health Information Exchange systems. Newark has also implemented the same HIE platform, so we can quickly learn from ongoing interventions to identify what is working and what needs to be adjusted to achieve the outcomes we all seek. The combined systems now contain protected health data on nearly 1 in 5 NJ residents.

Not only does our HIE share clinical data, but our system now sends alerts to churches that have health ministries when a congregant is admitted to the hospital and allows for doctors to make direct referrals to food pantries, legal services, and other social services. It is also helping us understand when a student who is chronically absent from high school is actually sick with Asthma because of dust or mold in her home. We are directly addressing the Social Determinants of Health.

Our ACO designation and data infrastructure have enabled us to leverage additional resources, including a number of multi-year grant programs and contracts. With the Regional Health Hub designation and continued State support, we will be able to continue our work to attract and retain corporate, private, and foundation funding and to ensure that those funds result in successful and sustainable programs in our communities.

Those programs address a wide range of health priorities. Over the past year alone, we have worked with our partners to address inequities in Maternal Health outcomes, access to Cancer

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screening and treatment, challenges in access to healthy food, connections between healthcare and the faith community, youth tobacco use prevention, school attendance, improvements to the built environment, and more.

Importantly, the Regional Health Hubs also provide an efficient and effective mechanism for connecting community voice and expertise to DOH and DHS, consulting on the needs of the region and strengths of local partners, including the non-profit community, as the Departments set priorities and award grants for the future. We are nimble enough to respond quickly to State needs and can bolster effective communication between administrative stakeholders and local communities, including executing awareness and education campaigns and disseminating important public health messages. In addition, as Regional Health Hubs, we have provided a safety net by taking on programs to meet community need when others are challenged in fulfilling their obligations.

Regional Health Hubs provide New Jersey with an opportunity to continue leading the nation in investing in an accountable and responsive infrastructure to address state and regional population health needs. We appreciate your support and we look forward to our continued work together.

For more information contact:

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