

# Transition Report on Family Wellness

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January 27, 2010

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# **Executive Summary**

## **Key Recommendations – 100 days**

Re-commit to the Mayoral Pledge of participation and the Mayoral Proclamation in Support of the Mayor's Wellness Campaign

Establish an on-going Mayor's Health Advisory Group (MHAG).

Reestablish an Environmental Commission to set environmental priorities for the City of Camden

Assemble a group to develop a plan to recruit a grocery store to Camden

## **Key Recommendations – 9 months**

Establish Camden City Wellness Month – Encourage Primary Care Wellness visit for every resident

Expand the farmer's markets in the city

## **Key Recommendations – 2 Years**

Demonstrate sustainable Mayor's Wellness Campaign programs

- "Youth in Motion" programs
- "Seniors in Motion" programs
- "Employers in Motion" programs
- "Community in Motion" programs

## Section 1

### Fitness and Recreation

#### ***Introduction:***

Approximately 62% of U.S. adults and 34% of U.S. children are overweight or obese. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), “The obesity rate has doubled since the late 1970s. The heavy are getting heavier. That’s particularly true of adults, but it’s also true of kids.”

#### ***Problem:***

Obesity has become an epidemic in America and in New Jersey. The consequences are startling:

- Eight out of ten adults are likely to become overweight or obese as they age, putting them at a higher risk for hospitalization, diabetes, arthritis, and cardiovascular disease.
- One in three U.S. teens is physically unfit, and inactive/obese children are more likely to develop depression and poor self-esteem as well as cardiac and bone problems.
- Obese employees cost employers \$460 to \$2,500 annually in medical expenditures and work absences.
- Treatment of medical conditions related to obesity cost NJ taxpayers \$39 million in 2003.
- Fifty-five percent of New Jersey residents are obese or overweight.
- New Jersey has reported the highest incidence in the nation in obesity among low-income kids aged 2-5 years.

The good news is many recognize these health care risks and want to do something about it:

- More than half of parents say that their children want to exercise more.
- 30 percent of parents say that their children want to lose weight.

#### ***Current State:***

First Lady Michelle Obama discussed the importance of healthy eating and physical activity initiatives to help combat childhood obesity in the U.S, at the recent winter meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors’. In her speech, the First Lady outlined how the removal of play from children’s lives has seriously reduced the amount of physical activity they get every day, and how that play deficit was hurting both children and communities. She then went on to call on mayors to work together with different parties to ensure that children got enough wholesome food and physical activity to stay healthy.

The Mayors Wellness Campaign supports Mayors as Champions of Community Health. The goal of the campaign is to improve health, reduce health care costs related to obesity, and make New Jersey a national leader in community-based health interventions. The Mayors Wellness Campaign seeks to foster active living and healthy lifestyles by providing communities the structure and resources to implement healthy community initiatives. This would be a reaffirmation of commitment to these principles in that Camden's previous Mayor signed a Mayoral Pledge of Participation long with a City Council resolution in support of the Mayor's Wellness Campaign (<http://www.mayorswellnesscampaign.org>). The Mayors Wellness Campaign will work to implement a comprehensive program of outreach, education and technical assistance activities to combat obesity and inactivity issues

***Recommendations:***

**100 Days**

- Re-commit to the Mayoral Pledge of participation and the Mayoral Proclamation in Support of the Mayor's Wellness Campaign (See Attachment #1)
- Pursue a Council Resolution in Support of the Mayor's Wellness Campaign (see Attachment #2)
- Lead Camden City to the next level of the NJ Health Care Quality Institute's Mayors Wellness Campaign by initiating the development of programs in the following areas:
  - "Youth in Motion" programs
  - "Seniors in Motion" programs
  - "Employers in Motion" programs
  - "Community in Motion" programs

**9 months**

- Establish Camden City Wellness Month – Encourage Primary Care Wellness visit for every resident
- Strengthen/Establish Recreation Department Leadership
- Announce the City's intention to encourage and support Youth Athletic Leagues

## 2 Years

- Demonstrate sustainable
  - “Youth in Motion” programs
  - “Seniors in Motion” programs
  - “Employers in Motion” programs
  - “Community in Motion” programs
- Achieve the designation of “a NJ Healthy Town”.  
(The Mayor’s Wellness Campaign created the “Healthy Town” designation to recognize communities in which the mayors have done an extraordinary job of promoting active living and healthy lifestyles.)
- Rollout 2012 Recreation Program Calendar for city residents

## Section 2

### Food and Nutrition

#### ***Problem:***

Poor nutrition is an underlying factor in many of the health issues that are impacting Camden City residents. Moreover, there is insufficient access and availability of fresh fruit and vegetables in the city.

It is well documented how important good nutrition is for overall health and wellness. A healthy diet directly impacts longevity and can help prevent many major illnesses and disease. Every stage of life has specific nutrition needs. Infants and toddlers require nutrients for normal growth and development. Kids and teens require good nutrition to fuel their growing bodies and to support learning and other school activities. Proper nutrition is important for the specific needs of men and women and is a key component of healthy aging for the senior population.

#### ***Current State:***

Camden City has a higher incidence of many major health benchmarks when compared to state averages. Poor nutrition undoubtedly plays a part. Camden city's infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births is 16.4, compared to the New Jersey state average of 5.7. Camden City's mortality rates are above State and County averages for many types of cancers including prostate, colorectal, lung, and breast<sup>11</sup>.

Proper nutrition is essential in preventing and managing many of the disease states that impact Camden residents. In addition, proper diet and eating habits are an important component of the healthy lifestyle that will support the success of the city's residents.

#### ***Recommendations:***

##### **100 Days**

- Establish an on-going Mayor's Health Advisory Group (MHAG). The MHAG could and provide updates and feedback on the progress of the health initiatives that have been implemented in the city. It is important that this advisory group is focused on the Mayor's healthcare priorities and not other agendas. For membership, the Mayor should consider individuals from the Family Wellness Committee, the Health Futures Committee, the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers, Youth leagues and others involved in youth fitness.

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<sup>1</sup> Community Health Profile, Camden City, New Jersey, Holleran Consulting, September 8, 2006

- March is National Nutrition month – partner with city’s health institutions to promote nutrition. This is an excellent opportunity for the Mayor to leverage existing resources and take a public position on nutrition and health. Each of the healthcare institutions has staff dietitians that could provide professional support and guidance. The 2010 theme for National Nutrition Month is “Nutrition from the ground up”. National Nutrition Month reinforces the importance of nutrition as a key component of good health.
- Work with the board of education to add nutrition education to the curriculum. Camden has a young population with 35% of residents under the age of 18. Educating children and parents about the importance of nutrition in overall good health is Camden’s best opportunity to make a change in the existing poor nutrition habits of the city’s children. Teaching good eating habits to children can set the stage for a lifetime of proper nutrition.
- Assemble a group to develop a plan to recruit one or more grocery stores to Camden. It will take more than 100 days to bring a much-needed grocery store to Camden; however, it is important that the process begins immediately. This group should work in concert with the Mayor’s Economic Development Subcommittee and possibly the New Jersey Economic Development Authority

## **9 Months**

- Expand the farmer’s markets in the city. There are currently four farmer’s markets in the city. In addition to providing access to fresh fruit and vegetables, the farmer’s markets fulfill an important role in community health. Most offer wrap around services such as health screenings, nutrition education, healthy cooking demonstrations, and help connect residents to existing community health resources. The Mayor can work with the Camden Area Health Education Center (AHEC) to recruit additional sponsors for more markets.
- Continue to work closely with the school district on resources and education to support nutrition and health for the city’s children
  - Encourage the development of resources for parents including nutrition workshops, and incentives for parents to get involved in nutrition initiatives.



- Research and apply for grants and State and federal funding opportunities to support proper nutrition.
- Health Department – develop specific programs for pre-natal care and proper pre-natal nutrition to combat the high infant mortality and low birth rates prevalent in Camden. Pre-natal care is an excellent way to jump start proper nutrition habits for Camden’s parents and children.

## **2 Years**

- Health Department - continue to develop and refine programs to support pre-natal care and pre-natal nutrition.
- Communicate and promote nutrition successes from first 100 days and 9 month goals.
- Support the success of the grocery stores to ensure continued access for residents
- Build on the successes of the nutrition education programs for children and parents by identifying additional resources and encouraging further development of programs for children, families, and seniors.

## **Section 3**

### **Environmental Health in Camden**

#### ***Problem:***

Most houses in Camden were built before lead was banned in 1970 and contain lead paint. Lead levels in the drinking water in many homes and in Camden's public schools have also been found at dangerously high levels. Chipping and exposed lead paint can be breathed in as dust or be swallowed. Children who become lead poisoned suffer from learning disabilities, delayed growth, brain damage, and behavior problems. Severe lead poisoning can cause coma and death.

Studies show that Camden City residents have unusually high rates of respiratory diseases, especially asthma. People with asthma are particularly vulnerable to the effects of pollution. Camden City residents have elevated rates of cancer of the lung, esophagus, stomach, liver, kidney, and pancreas. Lung cancer rates are especially high compared to the state-wide rates.

#### ***Current State:***

There is an ordinance establishing an environmental commission back in the 1970s. The commission became inactive and was resurrected in the late 90s, only to become inactive again in the last ten years.

Camden has an active Shade Tree Advisory Board. Right now it is in the process of getting the City's Community Forestry Management Plan written. It should be done by January 2010. This will provide for at least \$25,000 in grant funding from the state for next year to implement the plan. Some towns actually tie the two together. This is something to explore once the CFMP is done. The Shade Tree Advisory Board will be working on a plan to establish it into a Shade Tree Commission.

#### ***Recommendations:***

##### **100 Days**

- Reestablish an Environmental Commission to set environmental priorities for the City of Camden.

##### **9 Months**

- Establish a Shade Tree Commission for the City of Camden.

## ***Acknowledgements***

The Family Wellness Committee of Mayor Dana Redd's Transition Team is please to submit this Addendum to the Family Wellness Committee Final Report.

The Committee was staffed by the following individuals:

Mark Bryant, CEO, CAMCare

Robert Hockel, VP for Operations, Virtua Health System

Anthony Mazzarelli, MD, Cooper University Hospital

James Wallace, VP, Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center

Gary Young, EVP, Cooper University Hospital

The Family Wellness Committee would like to extend Special Thanks to the Family Wellness Transition Focus Group:

Scott McCray	Cooper University Hospital
Carole Wolfe	Camden AHEC
Tom Jones	UMDNJ
Joan Gray	Virtua Health System
Dr. Fred Ashong	Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center
Dr. Jeff Brenner	UMDNJ
Dr. Stan Miller	Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center
Anthony Mazzarelli	Cooper University hospital
Gwendolyn Harris	Rand Institute, Rutgers University- Camden
James Wallace	Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center
Thomas Bimmer	Virtua Health System

The Family Wellness Committee would also like to extend Special Thanks to Karen Clarke, Manager Behavioral health, Lourdes Medical Center of Burlington County for her insight into Behavioral Health issues.

**SAMPLE MAYORAL PROCLAMATION**

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**A Proclamation by the Mayor of *[Municipality]*  
Supporting the Mayors Wellness Campaign**

**Date**

- Whereas, Fifty-five percent of New Jersey residents are obese or overweight, and
- Whereas, Medical expenses for treating problems related to obesity in our state total billions annually, and
- Whereas, New Jersey has reported the highest incidence in the nation in obesity among low-income kids aged 2-5 years, and
- Whereas, The current generation of children in America may have shorter life expectancies than their parents, and
- Whereas, The Mayors Wellness Campaign supports Mayors as champions of community health, and
- Whereas, The goal of the campaign is to improve health, reduce health care costs related to obesity, and make New Jersey a national leader in community-based health interventions, and
- Whereas, The Mayors Wellness Campaign seeks to foster active living and healthy lifestyles by providing communities the structure and resources to implement healthy community initiatives, and
- Whereas, The Mayors Wellness Campaign will work to implement a comprehensive program of outreach, education and technical assistance activities to combat obesity and inactivity issues for ***[Municipality]***, now therefore be it
- Whereas, ***[Municipality]*** cares deeply about all of its citizens and the future health of its children
- Resolved, That I, ***[Mayor's name and title]***, ask that all residents of this community join me in supporting the Mayors Wellness Campaign, and be it further
- Resolved, That I encourage the residents of ***[Municipality]*** to participate in Mayors Wellness Campaign activities to promote exercise, eating properly and living healthier and better lives.

**SAMPLE COUNCIL RESOLUTION**

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**RESOLUTION #000  
of [Municipality], New Jersey**

**A Resolution Supporting the Mayors Wellness Campaign**

**Date**

- Whereas, Across New Jersey, communities are facing a rise in health care costs, and
- Whereas, Physical activity levels have been decreasing and obesity rates increasing, and
- Whereas, Local leaders are looking for ways to promote active living, healthy eating, and overall wellness in their communities, and
- Whereas, The Mayors Wellness Campaign works with Mayors and key leaders to shape healthier lifestyles for the men, women and children in their communities, and
- Whereas, Communities can work towards the goal of healthier citizens and lower health care costs by championing practices and programs that promote active living, and
- Whereas, The Mayors Wellness Campaign will work to implement a comprehensive program of outreach, education and technical assistance activities to combat obesity and inactivity issues for **[Municipality]**, now therefore be it
- Resolved, by the Council of the municipality of **[name]**, New Jersey, ask that all residents of this community join us in supporting the Mayors Wellness Campaign, and be it further
- Resolved, That we encourage the residents of **[Municipality]** to participate in Mayors Wellness Campaign activities to promote exercise, eating properly and living healthier and better lives.