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RWJBarnabas Health Receives Significant Grant from U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' Administration for Children and Families

Hospital System Marks National Human Trafficking Prevention Month with Announcement of Grant-Funded Enhancements to Anti-Human Trafficking Collaborative

West Orange, NJ, January 26, 2023 – [RWJBarnabas Health](#) announced today that the health system is a [recipient of a \\$500,000 grant](#) from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP). ACF formally announced this funding in late-2022, and to mark National Human Trafficking Prevention Month, RWJBarnabas Health announces that the new funding will be used to help support the system's Anti-Human Tracking Collaborative's efforts in educating staff across the system in identifying and treating individuals experiencing human trafficking and expanding access to critical services through strategic partnerships.

The Anti-Human Trafficking Collaborative was formed at RWJBarnabas Health to raise awareness among health professionals about labor and sex trafficking of children and adults. Drawing upon the expertise of [Covenant House New Jersey](#) in screening and identification protocols, the Collaborative has been working to improve the ability of health professionals to recognize individuals who may be experiencing human trafficking and respond appropriately. As a grant recipient, the system will now implement ACF's SOAR to Health and Wellness Training Demonstration Program, which is grounded in a public health approach and designed to build the capacity of health professionals through specialized training to identify, treat, and respond to the complex needs of individuals who have experienced trafficking.

"In recognition of the investment we have already made in the system's Anti-Human Trafficking Collaborative as well as a comprehensive education program to train our staff, we are incredibly honored to be one of only two organizations recognized by the Administration for Children and Families with this generous grant," said Suzanne Sernal, DNP, APN-BC, RNC-OB, C-ONQS, Vice President for Women's Services, RWJBarnabas Health. "Hospitals and health systems are critical parts of the solution in human trafficking. It is estimated that more than 80% of people access healthcare services during their trafficking experience. As an anchor institution and New Jersey's largest, most comprehensive academic healthcare system, we are in a unique position to help groups that have been



economically and socially underserved, including people who are experiencing human trafficking.”

According to ACF, “The SOAR to Health and Wellness Training Demonstration Program, a new pilot program grounded in ACF’s [SOAR to Health and Wellness](#) framework, will equip professionals in clinical health and social services settings to identify, treat and respond to people impacted by human trafficking by delivering culturally responsive, trauma-informed and patient-centered care.”

Human trafficking is a global issue, but it is a pervasively local issue in New Jersey, home to the RWJBarnabas Health system. RWJBarnabas Health provides access to healthcare throughout New Jersey to 5 of the state’s 9 million residents, including the densely populated northern counties bordering New York City. Jersey City and Newark (each home to an RWJBarnabas Health hospital) were identified as two of the top cities in New Jersey from which calls are placed to the National Human Trafficking Hotline.

“RWJBarnabas Health has been a committed advocate for individuals who have experienced human trafficking in New Jersey for several years,” said Julia Einbond, Associate Executive Director, Covenant House Action and Research Tank. “In working together to further build out the system’s Anti-Human Trafficking Collaborative through this grant, we will be able to connect many more individuals experiencing human trafficking with the support that they need.”

Through the SOAR to Health and Wellness Training Demonstration Program, RWJBarnabas Health will develop and implement evidenced-based practices across its 12 acute care sites to empower its nurses and care teams to identify and refer people experiencing human trafficking and provide sensitive and safe services to survivors, building upon its existing framework. The system will implement additional proactive policies, comprehensive staff trainings and partnerships with community services and law enforcement agencies to stem the tide of human trafficking and help individuals who are experiencing human trafficking receive appropriate care and services. Over the course of five years, SOAR training will reach all 38,000+ RWJBarnabas Health employees and volunteers statewide in addition to the employees at partnering community providers throughout New Jersey. Covenant House New Jersey will continue to serve as a trusted advisor through the training process, and will also serve as a referral source to assist in connecting individuals who have experienced human trafficking with appropriate services.

This week, in recognition of National Human Trafficking Prevention Month, RWJBarnabas Health will kick off its internal training enhancements.

ABOUT RWJBARNABAS HEALTH

RWJBarnabas Health is the largest, most comprehensive academic health care system in New



Jersey, with a service area covering eight counties with five million people. The system includes twelve acute care hospitals – Clara Maass Medical Center in Belleville, Community Medical Center in Toms River, Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center in Livingston, Jersey City Medical Center in Jersey City, Monmouth Medical Center in Long Branch, Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus in Lakewood, Newark Beth Israel Medical Center in Newark, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset in Somerville, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton in Hamilton, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Rahway in Rahway and Trinitas Regional Medical Center in Elizabeth, three acute care children’s hospitals, Children’s Specialized Hospital with a network of outpatient pediatric rehabilitation centers, a freestanding 100-bed behavioral health center, two trauma centers, a satellite emergency department, ambulatory care centers, geriatric centers, the state’s largest behavioral health network, comprehensive home care and hospice programs, fitness and wellness centers, retail pharmacy services, affiliated medical groups, multi-site imaging centers and two accountable care organizations.

RWJBarnabas Health is among New Jersey’s largest private employers – with more than 38,000 employees and 9,000 physicians– and routinely captures national awards for outstanding quality and safety. RWJBarnabas Health launched an affiliation with Rutgers University to create New Jersey’s largest academic health care system. The collaboration aligns RWJBarnabas Health with Rutgers’ education, research and clinical activities, including those at the Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey - the state's only NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center - and Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care. For more information, visit www.RWJBH.org.

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