



For Immediate Release

Contact: Carol Ann Campbell

cacampbell@njhcqi.org (973-567-1901)

QUALITY INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES MAYORS WELLNESS CAMPAIGN 2024 NEW JERSEY "HEALTHY TOWN" WINNERS

Find Out Which NJ Cities and Towns are Doing the Most to Improve Health and Wellness in Their Communities

Trenton, New Jersey — The New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute today announced the Mayors Wellness Campaign "Healthy Town" winners for 2024. These cities and towns go above and beyond to improve health and wellness in their communities through innovative programs in areas such as exercise, healthy eating, and mental health education and awareness.

The Mayors Wellness Campaign (MWC) is a program of the Quality Institute in partnership with the New Jersey State League of Municipalities. In addition to a record-breaking thirty-two Healthy Town winners, another sixteen towns were designated as 2024 "Healthy Town to Watch," and seven were designated as 2024 "Healthy Town Up-and-Coming."

"It's incredible to see the MWC Healthy Town designations keep growing year after year. It's proof that New Jersey's community leaders aren't just talking about health and wellness; they're making it," said Mike Cerra, Executive Director of the New Jersey League of Municipalities. "From small towns to big cities, these leaders are showing up for their residents and building healthier, more vibrant communities."

Each year, communities participating in the MWC complete a comprehensive Healthy Town application outlining the research they've done to identify their community health needs and explaining how they have organized their local MWC committee. The application also highlights the actions the towns have taken to make their communities healthier places to live, work, age, and play.

Here is a listing of the winners and the initiatives that helped them receive this recognition.

2024 Healthy Towns

Belleville, 2024 Healthy Town

Belleville has earned the Healthy Town designation for 2024, advancing from its 2023 designation as a Healthy Town to Watch. In partnership with Clara Maass Medical Center, RWJBarnabas Health, and local organizations, the township provided free health screenings and vaccination clinics. A collaboration with Kean University further supported student mental health by integrating social-emotional learning and family resources into the community.

"The 2024 Healthy Town designation illustrates that Belleville continues to focus on programs that help keep our residents healthy and well. From growing fruits and vegetables in our Community Garden, to promoting active lifestyles by expanding our parks and open spaces, to expanding our annual Green Fair, we remain committed to identifying ways we can help Belleville residents live healthier and happier lives," said Belleville Mayor Michael Melham.

Bernards Township, 2024 Healthy Town

Bernards Township has made an impressive leap from a Healthy Town Up-and-Coming in 2023 to achieving the Healthy Town designation in 2024. The Mayor's Fall Festival brought together over 2,000 attendees for a PEC-sponsored 5K, "Cider with a Cop," and pony rides, all while raising awareness for children with learning disabilities. Other initiatives, like the Town-Wide Green Yard Sale and Yoga in the Park with the Mayor, promoted sustainability, wellness, and community connection.

"I am proud that Bernards Township has been recognized by the Quality Institute as a 2024 Healthy Town. This recognition reflects our community's commitment to health and wellness, and we look forward to building on this momentum. By working closely with all township departments and our valued community partners, we will continue delivering programs and events that support the well-being of all our residents," said Bernards Township Mayor Janice M. Fields.



Bernardsville Borough, 2024 Healthy Town

Bernardsville Borough has advanced from a Healthy Town to Watch in 2023 to a Healthy Town designation in 2024. The borough addressed food insecurity through the Feeding Hands program, providing weekly meal distributions to underserved residents. The Music Through the Years event doubled senior program attendance by using direct mail to reduce isolation and promote social connection.

“As Mayor of Bernardsville, I am incredibly proud and honored that our town has been recognized with the 2024 Healthy Town Award. This achievement reflects our community’s dedication to health, wellness, and an active lifestyle. It is a testament to the hard work of our residents, our partner organizations, and municipal leaders who have prioritized the community’s well-being through innovative programs and initiatives,” said Bernardsville Mayor Mary Jane Canose.

Borough of Bay Head, 2024 Healthy Town

Bay Head earned a Healthy Town designation for 2024, driven by initiatives like Stevie’s Cupboard to address food insecurity and provide resources. The borough supported Point Pleasant Beach in launching its own MWC, strengthening neighboring health efforts. Events like the Mayor’s Chili Cook-off further connected residents while supporting local food security.

“Bay Head is extremely pleased to be once again named a Healthy Town. We are so very proud of our ALL-volunteer MWC and our co-chairs, Meryl Clement, and Sarah Erbe. The many programs and topics of discussion they come up with each year involve all age groups in town and stress physical and mental wellness for all residents of and visitors to Bay Head,” said Bayhead Mayor William Curtis.

“We also utilize all facilities available to us, i.e., the ocean, township buildings and businesses to name a few. We are happy to be a member of the Quality Institute’s MWC since its start in 2007 and to be named a Healthy Town in 2011, becoming the first Jersey Shore town so honored. All in all, we will continue to provide everyone with healthy programs each year,” he said.

Borough of Bergenfield, 2024 Healthy Town

Bergenfield advanced to a Healthy Town designation after previously being recognized as a Healthy Town to Watch. Through the health department, recreation department, and community partnerships, the borough provided fitness classes, mental health workshops, nutritional coaching, and Narcan training to residents of all ages.

"Bergenfield's recognition as a Healthy Town by the Quality Institute is a testament to our community's resilience, dedication, and collective spirit. The COVID-19 pandemic challenged us in ways we never imagined, but through hard work and unwavering commitment, we emerged stronger," said Bergenfield Mayor Arvin Amatorio.

"After being named a "Healthy Town to Watch" in 2022 and 2023, we expanded wellness programs, enhanced community engagement, and prioritized both physical and mental health. Our 2024 initiatives focused on inclusivity, offering events for all ages and promoting a healthier lifestyle. This achievement would not have been possible without the efforts of our Borough staff, volunteers, Mayor's Wellness Champions, dedicated committees, financial sponsors, and residents who embraced health and wellness as a shared goal. As Mayor, I am equally proud of our progress in health as I am of our infrastructure improvements," the mayor said.

Borough of Fort Lee, 2024 Healthy Town

Fort Lee has earned the Healthy Town designation for 2024, advancing from its 2023 status as a Healthy Town to Watch. The borough's community health assessment, offered in five languages, helped shape programs focused on physical activity, access to health information, and mental health. In partnership with the Korean American Association of Fort Lee and the Fort Lee Chinese American Community Association, initiatives included Mental Health First Aid training, an Employee Walking Challenge, and fresh produce markets accepting SNAP and WIC benefits.

"The Borough of Fort Lee is very proud to have attained the prestigious designation of Healthy Town. Our MWC and community partners, through collaborative efforts



with our local government leaders, continue to build a healthier community. We have tailored our health and wellness programs to meet the health needs identified in our 2024 Fort Lee Community Health Needs Assessment. As a result, we have increased offerings on physical activity and mental health programs. Our MWC, governing body, and community partners continue to prioritize the health and well-being of our residents by fostering a supportive environment where healthy choices increasingly become the norm, leading ultimately to a higher quality of life for all in our community,” said Mayor Mark Sokolich

Borough of Franklin Lakes, 2024 Healthy Town

Franklin Lakes has earned the Healthy Town designation for the second consecutive year, demonstrating its commitment to community wellness through diverse programming. The borough’s Living Healthy Journey, a six-week wellness initiative, engaged residents in fitness, nutrition, and mental health activities, while its Employee Wellness Program fostered a healthier workforce through partnerships with Bergen Municipal Employee Benefits Fund and Valley Hospital. Other standout initiatives included REACH (Reducing Addiction through Care and Help), which addressed substance abuse and mental health, and community-driven events like Hikes, Yoga, and Stand-Up Paddle Yoga, promoting physical activity and social connection.

“Franklin Lakes is honored to receive the 2024 Healthy Town designation from the Quality Institute. As in past years, this award, which reflects the variety of healthy activities our residents may draw upon, is the product of work by our Community Director, Dina Robinson, along with our many dedicated volunteers. We believe these activities not only improve the well-being of our residents but enhance the community spirit which makes Franklin Lakes such a wonderful town in which to live and work,” said Franklin Lakes Mayor Charles J.X. Kahwaty.

Community Director Dina Robinson emphasized the significance of promoting healthy living in Franklin Lakes.

“The focus on well-being is integral to all events and programs organized by the Mayors Wellness Campaign, as reflected in the campaign logo: Franklin Lakes

Living Healthy. By prioritizing opportunities for residents to enhance their health and overall quality of life, the MWC demonstrates a commitment to fostering a healthier community, Robinson said.

Borough of Glen Rock, 2024 Healthy Town

Glen Rock has moved up from a Healthy Town to Watch to a Healthy Town in 2024, recognizing its efforts to enhance wellness and social connections. Senior programming expanded with the success of Senior Fest and the Jolly Trolley holiday event, fostering engagement, and reducing isolation. The borough also prioritized physical activity through expanded recreation programs and mental health awareness by planning new community-driven initiatives. Glen Rock continues to strengthen its commitment to inclusivity, highlighted by its long-standing Pride celebration, which has become a model for other Bergen County towns.

“The Borough of Glen Rock has once again achieved the highly distinguished Healthy Town designation for 2024. Our Borough works tirelessly for the benefit of its residents, and to expand that service to include health and wellness is immeasurable. Specifically, I want to thank our Community Affairs Leaders, who have taken the reins of this program and brought so many inspirational events to the people. Glen Rock looks forward to continuing this important work for years to come,” said Mayor Kristine Morieko.

Borough of Wildwood Crest, 2024 Healthy Town

The Borough of Wildwood Crest received its fifth Healthy Town designation in 2024. The Borough continues to define what a local culture of health looks like in New Jersey. New this year was the Wildwood Crest Champion of Wellness Awards Ceremony and Luncheon, which recognized employees, residents, friends, youth, and business owners who have demonstrated a notable commitment to healthy living.

“Wildwood Crest is deeply committed to promoting wellness within our community. We are proud to be recognized as one of New Jersey's healthiest towns. I want to thank our wellness committee and staff for their hard work and our residents for



their unwavering support and dedication to our shared vision. As we set our sights on 2025, let's continue this important journey together," said Mayor Don Cabrera.

City of Asbury Park, 2024 Healthy Town

The City of Asbury Park has received another Healthy Town designation in 2024, showing its continued commitment to improving the health and wellness of its residents. While the City offers a wide range of activities and programs, there was particular focus this year on food justice for the most vulnerable residents.

"It is with pride and gratitude to our residents and community partners who helped our effort that we accept the Healthy Town Award for the fourth straight year. It demonstrates Asbury Park's commitment to the well-being of all members of our community," said Mayor John Moor. "Under the guidance of the MWC, we have worked to address the needs of our community and to ensure that access to information and resources is available to everyone and that the path towards better health and well-being can be a joyful and satisfying communal experience."

City of Plainfield, 2024 Healthy Town

The City of Plainfield has received a Healthy Town designation for the seventh year in a row. Through strong partnerships with local government, health care providers, and community organizations, Plainfield continues to address key health concerns, including health care access, health literacy, and social determinants of health. In 2024, the City's MWC expanded vaccination efforts, provided health literacy workshops, supported emergency food programs, and promoted physical activity and mental wellness, with a focus on inclusivity and outreach to underserved residents.

"The City of Plainfield is honored to once again be recognized as a Healthy Town, a distinction we have proudly upheld since 2018. This award is a testament to our unwavering commitment to the well-being of our residents, ensuring that health and wellness remain at the core of our community initiatives. Through innovative programs, strong partnerships, and a focus on health equity, we continue to create opportunities for every resident to thrive physically, mentally, and socially. I extend

my deepest gratitude to our dedicated teams, community organizations, and residents who work tirelessly to make Plainfield a healthier, stronger city. Together, we will build a future where wellness is accessible to all," said Mayor Adrian Mapp.

Deerfield Township, 2024 Healthy Town

Deerfield Township has for the first time received the Healthy Town designation. This dedicated community has continued to grow its MWC efforts to support diverse community needs. The program focuses on community building and engagement while ensuring residents have access to programming that promotes health and wellness.

"Deerfield Township is thrilled to be named a Healthy Town in New Jersey. After years of hard work toward this designation, we are proud to be recognized for the variety of health and wellness opportunities we offer in our community," said Mayor Abigail Perlstein O'Brien. "We are especially grateful to the MWC for its guidance, providing us with the tools and strategies that helped us achieve this milestone. Additionally, we are honored to have received the 2024 Innovation in Governance Award from the NJ League of Municipalities for the extensive list of programs we've been able to fund through valuable community partnerships."

Evesham Township, 2024 Healthy Town

Evesham Township has earned its Healthy Town designation for the fifth consecutive year by expanding outdoor activities, mental health initiatives, and senior-focused programs. The township introduced new outdoor events alongside annual favorites like the Trunk or Treat, Thanksgiving Turkey Trot, and Police Boot Camps, promoting physical activity for all ages. The 4th Annual Garden Tour partnered with local organizations to encourage mental wellness and socialization through nature. Prioritizing senior health, the township continued hosting affordable monthly bus trips, weekly wellness classes, and Lunch & Learn sessions covering fall prevention, Medicare education, and food security. Additionally, Evesham strengthened youth engagement by connecting 5th graders with local leaders, fostering civic education and community involvement.



"It is with immense pride that I can say Evesham Township has once again earned the prestigious Healthy Town designation for 2024. This now marks our community's fifth consecutive year with the Healthy Town designation, and it is yet another milestone in our ongoing commitment to the health and well-being of those in our township," said Mayor Jaclyn Veasy. "Through the MWC, we have been able to assess and enhance local initiatives that promote physical, mental, and spiritual well-being for all residents. From our annual Wellness Festival to the wide array of educational seminars offered throughout the year, to even our ongoing investments in open spaces and athletic facilities, our township continues to prioritize the health and wellness of our community. We remain steadfast in our commitment to the MWC and look forward to many more years of meaningful participation in this outstanding program."

Englewood, 2024 Healthy Town

The City of Englewood advanced to a Healthy Town in 2024, strengthening community engagement through creatively branded programs like March into Early Detection, Summer Steppers, and Get Fit in the Fall. The Englewood Family Wellness Weekend was a standout event, bringing together over 80 organizations to provide health screenings, fitness activities, and resources addressing food insecurity, social isolation, and health care access. Led by the Health Department, the MWC collaborated with local groups to ensure inclusive outreach, offering bilingual materials and free wellness programs.

"Englewood is so proud to receive the Healthy Town Award acknowledging the hard work of our Residents and our Health Department professionals," said Mayor Michael Wildes.

Freehold Borough, 2024 Healthy Town

Freehold Borough has again earned the Healthy Town designation for its commitment to health equity. Food initiatives such as mobile pantries, fresh produce vouchers, and the Community Kitchen have improved access while fostering social connections. Partnering with the Freehold Family Health Center, the borough referred over 1,500 residents to care. Expanding bike safety programs and

infrastructure through participatory budgeting further supported community well-being.

“The Borough of Freehold is honored to be recognized by the Quality Institute as a 2024 Healthy Town again. Our various programs provide all residents of our diverse community with opportunities to learn healthy habits. Our parks and outdoor spaces continue to improve, and we provide organized indoor events for all ages,” said Mayor Kevin Kane. “We focus on not just the physical, but the emotional, social and safety aspects of a healthy community. We look forward to continuing our work with local partners and businesses to improve the health and wellness of our residents. Thank you to the Mayors Wellness Campaign Committee members, our municipal staff and all our volunteers for making this possible.”

Hamilton Township, 2024 Healthy Town

As a third time Healthy Town designee, Hamilton continues to offer robust programming available for all residents while also ensuring that the community's most vulnerable populations have access to important health services such as free vision screenings, health education, and opportunities to engage in exercise activities in the town.

“I am proud that Hamilton has been designated a Healthy Town for the third consecutive year by the Quality Institute,” said Mayor Jeff Martin. “Our continued investment in accessible outdoor recreational opportunities, reducing barriers to food insecurity, and overall promotion of wellness activities demonstrates Hamilton’s commitment to our residents’ health.”

Hillsborough Township, 2024 Healthy Town

For the third year in a row Hillsborough has received a Healthy Town award. Each year the program continues to grow and this year through a MWC Community Mental Health grant, the township offered a Yoga by the Pond series as just one way to support the physical and mental health of residents.



"Hillsborough Township is honored to again be recognized with a Healthy Town Designation by the Quality Institute. The Mission of our MWC is to improve the health and wellness of the community, and we plan to capitalize on the integration of my Diabetes Advocacy and Hillsborough's Diabetes Resource Center into our efforts. We look forward to engaging Hillsborough residents through innovative programs and outreach well into the future," said Mayor John Ciccarelli.

Jefferson Township, 2024 Healthy Town

Jefferson Township has moved up from Healthy Town to Watch to a 2024 Healthy Town to Watch. Jefferson focused on offering a variety of programs that impact both the physical and mental health of residents. These initiatives are powered by their MWC and by partnerships with local organizations and groups such as the Youth Coalition and Morris County Parks.

Mayor Eric Wilsusen credits the achievement to collaboration between township and community organizations that promote health awareness, education, and prevention. He highlights partnerships with Morris County Parks, the Jefferson Trails Committee and Recreation Department in showcasing the area's natural beauty. The MWC addresses both physical and mental well-being, working with groups like the Jefferson Township Youth Coalition, Municipal Alliance, and CONNECT to improve attitudes and reduce stigma toward mental health and addiction.

"I look forward to expanding these initiatives to promote lifelong wellness in the future," Mayor Wilsusen said.

Maplewood, 2024 Healthy Town

For the second year in a row, the Township of Maplewood is a Healthy Town. Through art programs for older adults, crisis intervention services, environmental education, vaccination clinics, and food security initiatives, the township continues to support residents' efforts to live healthy and active lives.

"Being selected as a healthy town through the Mayors Wellness Campaign is not just an honor, but a reflection of our collective commitment to the well-being of every resident. By working together, we can continue to promote healthier lifestyles, foster a supportive environment, and ensure that our community thrives in both body and spirit. This partnership is a vital step toward building a future where wellness is a priority for all," said Mayor Nancy Adams

Montclair Township, 2024 Healthy Town

Montclair has returned to the Healthy Town process with a top designation in 2024. With innovative programs covering a wide range of health and wellness areas, the Health Department ensures that residents have access to physical and mental health activities that create an environment of inclusivity.

"I'm thrilled to accept this important designation from the Quality Institute on behalf of our residents and community partners. This recognition reflects the dedication and tireless efforts of our Health & Human Services Department and its Director, Amy Monaco. Our township is deeply committed to public health and creating environments that promote healthy lifestyles, equity, and sustainability. This includes initiatives like community gardens and farmer's markets for healthy food access, being a walkable community with safe streets for cyclists and pedestrians, maintaining 170 acres of park space, and several sustainability initiatives to reduce negative environmental effects," said Mayor Renee Baskerville, M.D. "As a pediatrician and family medicine doctor with over 40 years of experience, I've witnessed firsthand the critical impact of investing in public health. As mayor, I will remain committed to ensuring that everyone who lives and works in Montclair has the resources they need to lead healthy and fulfilling lives."

Montgomery Township, 2024 Healthy Town

Montgomery Township has elevated its 2023 designation and achieved a Healthy Town award in 2024. Partnership with the Municipal Alliance has helped the Township focus on important substance use prevention programs in addition to vaccine clinics, wellness walks, and health education activities.



"We are so proud that Montgomery Township has earned the distinguished Healthy Town designation for 2024, after becoming a Healthy Town to Watch in 2023," said Mayor Neena Singh. "The MWC has helped us to study our town's needs, then start up or improve initiatives to support our community's physical, mental, social, and emotional wellness. We have taken positive actions to strengthen Montgomery as a community by engaging our residents in wellness-focused activities throughout the year. Providing our residents with the services they need is what good government is all about. We are looking forward to continuing work with our community partners to help our residents live healthier lives."

Mountainside, 2024 Healthy Town

Mountainside has earned a Healthy Town designation in its first year of applying, demonstrating a strong commitment to health and wellness. With a well-rounded MWC committee that includes local experts and leaders, the borough effectively used MWC resources and data to guide its programming. Prioritizing physical activity, mental health awareness, and injury prevention for older adults, Mountainside offered diverse programs such as strength and stability classes, chair exercise, and a popular pickleball tournament. Through self-reflection and resident feedback, the borough is continuously improving its initiatives.

"I am extremely proud and honored that Mountainside has received the Healthy Town designation from the Quality Institute. Mountainside has participated in the MWC for many years, but we were missing a few key requirements. Last year we made additional investments like designating a MWC Coordinator and prioritized health and wellness by broadening our programming to ensure all ages are engaged, said Mayor Paul N. Mirabelli. "The entire committee collaborated and brainstormed to come up with wonderful programs for our youth and seniors. We learned a lot about the needs of the community and are anxious to learn more. Health and wellness are a personal priority for me, and I am enthused that we continue to grow our programming to make Mountainside the healthiest town in Union County."

Municipality of Princeton, 2024 Healthy Town

The Municipality of Princeton is a 2024 Healthy Town. By offering community-driven events, Princeton has seen an increase in participation in activities, especially the book talk series which create a space for open dialogue and reflection on mental, physical, and social well-being. This adaptable approach not only promotes reading but also strengthens community ties, making it a valuable addition to the wellness initiative.

“We are honored that Princeton has been recognized as a Healthy Town for the third year in a row, particularly for our commitment to harm reduction. This designation reflects our ongoing efforts to prioritize public health and safety through compassionate, evidence-based approaches. Over the past year, our harm reduction campaign has included community-wide Narcan training sessions, equipping residents with the tools to prevent overdose deaths, as well as educational book talks that have fostered important conversations about substance use, stigma, and recovery,” Mayor Mark Freda. “By expanding access to resources, strengthening partnerships, and promoting awareness, we are empowering our community to make informed, healthier choices. Princeton remains dedicated to leading with empathy and innovation to ensure that everyone has the support they need. Together, we continue to build a safer, stronger, and healthier Princeton.”

Paterson, 2024 Healthy Town

The City of Paterson earned its Healthy Town designation through initiatives expanding access to mental health and addiction services, enhancing environmental health efforts, and promoting health education. Key programs include RealFix, a real-time opioid withdrawal support service, a mobile health unit for screenings and education, and ongoing infrastructure improvements. A highlight of 2024 was the city’s month-long Mental Health Awareness campaign, which provided a month of activities addressing social determinants of health that impact mental health.

“I’m proud that Paterson has once again achieved the highly distinguished Healthy Town designation for 2024—our fifth year in a row! This recognition is a testament



to our city's unwavering commitment to improving the health and well-being of our residents through innovative programs, partnerships, and community engagement," said Mayor Andre Sayegh. "From expanding access to green spaces and promoting physical activity to enhancing mental health resources, Paterson continues to prioritize initiatives that empower our community to lead healthier lives."

Point Pleasant Beach, 2024 Healthy Town

In its first official year as a MWC town, Point Pleasant Beach has received a Healthy Town designation. A range of programming included themed Walks with the Mayor, an intergenerational education program in which high schoolers assist older adults with technology, and therapy dog visits to local group homes.

"We are incredibly honored to receive the 2024 Healthy Town Designation in our very first year of launching the MWC. I want to thank our local organizations, volunteers, and residents who have embraced this initiative and contributed to its early success. In our first year, the campaign has successfully engaged the community through a variety of health-focused initiatives, including fitness programs, mental health resources, social activities, and wellness education," Mayor Douglas Vitale. "As the campaign continues to grow, we remain committed to expanding wellness opportunities and ensuring a sustainable, long-term impact on all aspects of community health. Residents are encouraged to stay engaged and participate in our upcoming wellness events and programs and to provide feedback ensuring we continue to meet the community's needs."

Rockaway Township, 2024 Healthy Town

Rockaway Township is a first-time Healthy Town designee. The township provides free programming for residents, including a Mayor's Walking Challenge, financial wellness education, nutrition education, and blood drives. The Township uses evaluation data to ensure programs are effective and meaningful for improving health and wellness in the community.

"I am extremely proud that Rockaway Township has earned a 2024 Healthy Town designation," said Rockaway Township Mayor Joe Jackson. "My administration, through the collaborative planning of engaging community programs and events, has embraced the MWC and has found it to be a very valuable way of demonstrating our commitment to health, wellness, and social connectivity in our community. We look forward to the Township's continued participation in the MWC, and further success in helping elevate the physical, social, and mental health of our residents."

The City of Long Branch, 2024 Healthy Town

The City of Long Branch earned its first Healthy Town designation in 2024 with diverse, accessible programs focused on senior wellness, youth engagement, and multi-generational health. The MWC ensures accessibility through citywide events, translated materials, and UEZ funding for free programs. Expansions like Zumba at the Senior Center and an Alzheimer's seminar saw strong participation, with thousands of residents engaging in wellness initiatives.

"We are incredibly proud that Long Branch has earned the designation of a "Healthy Town" in 2025. This recognition highlights our ongoing commitment to the health and wellness of our community," said Mayor John Pallon. "We remain dedicated to meeting our residents where they are, providing innovative opportunities for staying active and engaged. From our Senior Center and Recreation Department, special events, and the Arts & Cultural Center, Long Branch is continuously offering fresh programs, resources, and essential health care services for individuals of all ages and abilities. Looking ahead, we're excited to further invest in our future with the upcoming launch of the state-of-the-art Health, Wellness & Technology Center, slated to break ground this summer."

Township of Scotch Plains, 2024 Healthy Town

In 2024, Scotch Plains received a Healthy Town designation boasting staple programs like Pride in the Park and its ongoing farmers markets. The Township also



hosted the first annual Mental Health and Wellness Fair and Walk and plans to continue this program based on its overwhelming success.

"I am very proud that Scotch Plains has been recognized, once again, by the Quality Institute as a 2024 Healthy Town," Mayor Josh Losardo said. "During my time as mayor, so much of the focus has been on creating healthier and happier Scotch Plains. We have been doing yoga, participating in 5K runs to kick off the summer and pushing away from our desks to go for walks on our lunch breaks. We have created more active and enhanced park space, organized even more recreation programs, and are determined to become even more fit and even more active in 2025. Our ongoing designation through the Quality Institute shows we are on the right path."

Township of South Brunswick, 2024 Healthy Town

After another successful program year, South Brunswick Township has received a Healthy Town designation for 2024. One of the standout programs from the year was the "Cram the Cruiser" event which creates a fun and interactive way for children to engage with law enforcement while also helping provide food to those in need in the community.

"I'm so proud that South Brunswick Township has achieved the highly distinguished Healthy Town designation for 2024, building upon our ongoing commitment to community health and wellness in which we received Healthy Town to Watch in 2023 and Healthy Town Up and Coming in 2022. South Brunswick has been an active participant in the MWC, and this recognition highlights our township's dedication to fostering programs that keep our residents healthy and thriving," said Mayor Charlie Carley. "The MWC has played a vital role in helping us enhance local initiatives that support the physical, mental, and overall well-being of our community. Whether it's our annual health and wellness events, educational programs, or continued investment in our parks and recreational facilities, our township remains committed to promoting a healthier future for all."

Township of Stafford, 2024 Healthy Town

For the second year in a row, the Township of Stafford has been designated a Healthy Town. New this year, in partnership with the National Fitness Campaign, the Township built an adult fitness center for residents, enhancing access to physical health opportunities in the community.

"I am so thrilled for the Township of Stafford to be recognized again by the Quality Institute as a 2024 Healthy Town," said Mayor Robert Henken. "We recognize that health is a way of life. This past year, we were fortunate to receive grant funding to install an adult fitness center at Nautilus Park. This coincides with the start of the Stafford Pathfinders program, started by our MWC volunteers, to form a walking group in the Township. This was part of our MWC this past year and partially funded by the National Fitness Campaign and Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey. Working with our community partners, we will continue to strive to provide new programs and events for all our residents to empower them to improve their health. Thank you to the MWC staff, the Committee and the Township staff for making this a possibility."

Township of Woodbridge, 2024 Healthy Town

The Township of Woodbridge has once again received the highest achievement and has been designated a 2024 Healthy Town. The MWC offers a wide range of health and wellness activities including affordable sports clinics, increased access to health clinics and screenings, and innovative ways to keep residents informed that include a local TV channel and a township-wide call system.

"We are honored to receive the Healthy Town designation once again, marking our fourth consecutive year of recognition," said Mayor John E. McCormac. "Since being a founding recipient in 2008, Woodbridge Township has remained committed to promoting health and wellness for all residents. Thanks to the leadership of Council President Ficarra and our Wellness Committee, we continue to expand programs that encourage active lifestyles, provide access to vital health resources, and foster a healthier community for everyone."

Village of Ridgewood, 2024 Healthy Town



The Village of Ridgewood has achieved a Health Town designation this year. A focus on inclusionary programming that covers a wide range of health topics put Ridgewood into the top category. Continued efforts to expand mental health activities will carry the program's success into 2025.

“Ridgewood NJ is an amazing place to live and call home. And while I am so proud of the many accolades our Village has received, our recent designation as Healthy Town is at the top of the list. Our Health Department and the supporting Mayor’s Wellness Committee have done an incredible job in bringing healthy eating, exercise and lifestyles to our residents. Staying healthy is a choice for our residents and we are so proud of the efforts we have made in helping them make that choice,” said Mayor Paul Vagianos.

2024 Healthy Towns to Watch

Atlantic City, 2024 Healthy Town to Watch

Atlantic City has advanced to a Healthy Town to Watch, building on its 2023 designation as a Healthy Town Up-and-Coming. The city’s MWC initiatives, including a 75-Day Health & Wellness Program, citywide fitness clubs, and senior workshops, focus on improving health outcomes and addressing key community priorities. In partnership with AtlantiCare, Rowan University, and other local organizations, Atlantic City continues to engage residents through free, impactful programming that fosters well-being.

“We are truly honored the Quality Institute is once again recognizing our efforts to continuously improve the quality of life of our residents,” said Mayor Marty Small, Sr. “From our youth to our seniors, and everyone in between, our Health and Human Services Department works tirelessly to create diverse programming and activity focused on the mental, physical and spiritual health of our entire community, as well as our city employees.”

Borough of Hawthorne, 2024 Healthy Town to Watch

Hawthorne has advanced from a Healthy Town Up-and-Coming to a Healthy Town to Watch in 2024, demonstrating its growing commitment to community wellness. The Mayor's Walk for Wellness expanded, incorporating health vendors and programming for residents with autism, while senior engagement efforts flourished with free movie screenings, fitness events, and social gatherings. Pedestrian safety improvements, including push-to-walk signals and reflective vest giveaways, addressed local concerns.

"I am honored that Hawthorne has been recognized by the Quality Institute as a Healthy Town to Watch. Our MWC has been highly effective in introducing new programs that benefit residents of all ages, as we work toward fostering a healthier community, both physically and mentally. The annual Walk for Wellness continues to gain momentum, attracting more participants and vendors each year. The MWC also collaborates closely with the Police Department's Traffic Bureau to offer valuable pedestrian and vehicle safety tips, while hosting walking vest giveaways biannually," said Mayor John V. Lane. "We remain dedicated to cultivating a healthy environment for all Hawthorne residents and to developing new initiatives that promote wellness. Our commitment to expanding and enhancing this program and participation in the MWC grows stronger each year."

Borough of Highlands, 2024 Healthy Town to Watch

Highlands has retained its Healthy Town to Watch designation for the second consecutive year, recognized for its diverse and sustainable wellness programs. The borough continues to offer a strong mix of activities, including weekly farmers markets, senior game hours, teen nights, and adult fitness classes. Programs like Walk with the Mayor, historic walking tours, and the annual Pride event further engage residents of all ages. Through its annual community health survey, Highlands tracks evolving health priorities, ensuring inclusive programming that meets the needs of underserved residents.

"The Highlands MWC Team is very excited to be awarded 2024 Healthy Town to Watch. Highlands will continue to utilize our partnership with the MWC to host wellness programming throughout 2025. These events will encourage both healthy



lifestyles and increase community awareness of the factors contributing to healthy outcomes. My goal is to encourage a holistic approach to promote sound mental, nutritional, and physical health through activity and education. For the last five years, I have been committed to improving the health and wellness of Highlanders and will continue to do so in the future," said Mayor Carolyn Broullon.

Borough of New Milford, 2024 Healthy Town to Watch

New Milford earned a Healthy Town to Watch designation, prioritizing adult obesity, heart disease, and diabetes prevention. Through free programs like the "Know Your Neighborhood" walking initiative and supermarket tours, the borough promoted accessible programs. Partnering with the New Milford YMCA, ShopRite, and local health professionals, the MWC ensured inclusive community engagement.

"Residents of New Milford have worked very hard, and I am proud to say that our community has achieved the 2024 Healthy Town-to-Watch designation. We have certainly seen the positive results of our various local MWC initiatives focused on physical and mental health and we look forward to continuing our partnership with MWC," said Mayor Michael J. Putrino.

Borough of Old Tappan, 2024 Healthy Town to Watch

Old Tappan has been recognized as Healthy to Watch for the second consecutive year, continuing to prioritize mental health, chronic disease prevention, and healthy lifestyles. Through its Community Conversations series, residents engage directly with health care professionals on critical topics like opioid misuse, Alzheimer's, and wellness. A mental health book club, led by a local therapist, provides an ongoing space for discussion on issues such as anxiety and trauma. The township continues to expand its initiatives, ensuring accessible health education and engagement for the community.

"We are very proud and honored that Old Tappan has been recognized as a 2024 Healthy Town to Watch by the Quality Institute. This recognition is due to the hard work and initiative of our MWC," Mayor Thomas E. Gallagher. "The goal of our committee is to promote health-forward programs to support Old Tappan

residents and to improve their fitness, nutrition, and mental health while strengthening our community. Working with our community partners, we strive to provide programs and events for all our residents to empower them to improve health and mental outcomes in the Borough of Old Tappan.”

Borough of Roselle, 2024 Healthy Town to Watch

Roselle has achieved the Healthy Town-To-Watch designation, demonstrating strong community engagement and a commitment to addressing local health challenges. The borough focused on increasing access to health care, addressing chronic disease, and promoting mental health awareness. Programs like Walk with the Mayor, fitness classes, and a Disabilities Awareness Event successfully engaged residents, with approximately 600 participants in 2024.

“The Borough of Roselle is proud to be designated as a Healthy Town -to -Watch by the Quality Institute. This recognition highlights our dedication to building a healthier community by developing programs and providing resources that promote active living, mental wellness, and overall well-being for our diverse population of residents,” said Mayor Donald Shaw. “We have worked very hard on our MWC programs through-out the past few years and our programs have been able to bring our community members together to achieve one common goal and that is a life that encompasses all aspects of good health. With programs such as our community health screenings, our annual MWC Kick Off event or our Disability Awareness/ Different Abilities Field Day, here in the Borough of Roselle we remain committed to increasing our efforts and partnerships to create a healthier, more vibrant Roselle for all. This achievement is a testament to truly caring for and being committed to improving the health and wellness in our community.”

Borough of Wenonah, 2024 Healthy Town to Watch

Wenonah has advanced to a Healthy Town to Watch, demonstrating strong momentum in improving its MWC. The borough prioritized mental health, community safety, and senior wellness, expanding successful programs like the Mental Health Awareness Walk and the Holiday Lights Bike Ride. Through



collaboration with local organizations, Wenonah increased participation and diversified offerings, including chair yoga and pedestrian safety initiatives.

"I am very proud that Wenonah has been designated a Healthy Town to Watch for 2024, our second year of recognition for participation in the MWC initiative. This program has been a great way to introduce new wellness initiatives to our residents while also highlighting the wonderful work already being done by many of our local community organizations in support of health and wellness," said Mayor Jessica S. Doheny. "We are especially proud of our work in supporting our senior population and people of all ages in increasing awareness of mental health services in our region. We are excited to continue our participation in MWC and look forward to increased health and wellness opportunities for Wenonah residents for years to come.-

Brick Township, 2024 Healthy Town to Watch

Brick Township has advanced from a Healthy Town Up and Coming to a Healthy Town to Watch, demonstrating strong community engagement, and expanded wellness initiatives. The township addressed substance misuse, mental health, and chronic disease through targeted programs, including Mental Health First Aid training, overdose awareness initiatives, and senior wellness activities. The "Pick Up Brick" program promoted environmental responsibility and physical activity, while the Senior Shuttle and Challenger Programs ensured accessibility for underserved populations.

"We are proud that Brick Township has been named a Healthy Town-to-Watch," said Mayor Lisa Crate. "We work hard to ensure that we offer programs that give residents a chance to stay active and healthy. From youth sports programs to pickleball, chair yoga and dancing for seniors, Brick Township offers something for people of all ages. We are going to continue to develop and implement programs that promote healthy lifestyles for all residents, and we are excited to continue participating in the Mayor's Wellness Campaign."

City of Elizabeth, 2024 Healthy Town to Watch

Elizabeth earned the Healthy Town to Watch designation for its commitment to health equity and accessibility. Guided by a Health Equity and Diversity Assessment, the city addressed economic stability, chronic disease management, and health care access. Programs like mental health stigma reduction, disease outreach, and senior emergency preparedness reached 30,000 residents.

“We are honored that Elizabeth has been recognized as a 2024 Healthy Town-to-Watch. This designation reflects our commitment to promoting health and well-being through wellness programs, safer public spaces, and community-driven initiatives. We remain dedicated to creating a healthier city for all residents,” said Mayor J. Christian Bollwage.

City of Passaic, 2024 Healthy Town to Watch

The City of Passaic has achieved its first Healthy Town to Watch designation in 2024. Through an MWC Community Mental Health Grant, the city focused on bringing Mental Health First Aid training and support to teens, adults, and city employees.

“I am thrilled that the City of Passaic has been designated as a Healthy Town-to-Watch. As Mayor, directing the MWC has been a priority. I have been dedicated to advocating, collaborating, and promoting the health needs of our community and of the city staff,” said Mayor Hector C. Lora. “This achievement strengthens our commitment to educating residents of all ages, from children to seniors, through continued partnerships. With this designation, the City of Passaic is even more determined to work together to build a healthier community for all.”

Clark Township, 2024 Healthy Town to Watch

Clark Township has been designated a Healthy Town to Watch, moving up from last year’s Healthy Town Up-and-Coming status. The Township’s commitment to community wellness is reflected in its expanding partnerships with Atlantic Health, Med Mobile, and local organizations to provide health screenings, mental health awareness, and chronic disease prevention programs. In 2024, Clark introduced



new initiatives like the Sister Cities Collaboration and Welcome Baby Event, while also growing its recreation and wellness offerings for residents of all ages.

“After achieving a bronze designation in 2023, I am so proud that the Township of Clark has received a silver designation for 2024 as a Healthy Town to Watch,” said Mayor Angel Albanese. “Clark is very fortunate to have an amazing team that works tirelessly for our residents and employees initiating various programs to improve everyone's health and well-being. We look forward to continuing our recreational activities, events, and community initiatives and are excited to be introducing new programs in the upcoming year.”

Cranbury Township, 2024 Healthy Town to Watch

Cranbury Township received its first Healthy Town to Watch designation in 2024. Notably, the Township successfully built its first inclusive playground, allowing children of all abilities to enjoy access to the facilities and opportunities to be active.

“I am beyond proud that Cranbury Township has achieved the 2024 Healthy Town-to-Watch designation. We are even more thrilled for Cranbury to have moved up from our previous 2023 designation of Healthy Town Up and Coming. Through the Mayor's Wellness Campaign, Committeewoman Dr. Barbara Rogers, Deputy Mayor Eman El-Badawi, and resident Joanne Charwin worked hard to create and support activities in town that promote healthy living,” said Mayor Lisa Knierim. “Through the MWC we have encouraged and prioritized the physical and mental health of our residents. Whether it's our Wellness Fair, community outreach programs, or continued investment in open space and recreation installments, Cranbury Township is prepared to continue our participation and initiatives through the Mayors Wellness Program for many years to come.”

Hainesport Township, 2024 Healthy Town to Watch

For the first time, Hainesport Township has received a Healthy Town to Watch designation. 2024 programming offered residents various opportunities to increase their awareness of important health topics including physical fitness, mental health, and preventive medical care.

"As mayor of Hainesport, I am honored to accept the designation of 2024 Healthy Town to Watch for the first time. This is a significant achievement for our small township, reflecting our dedication to community wellness. Since 2021, our active participation in the MWC has been instrumental in this success," Mayor Gilmore said. "We are especially grateful for the strong support of our partner organizations, including Thomas Jefferson University School Nursing and Hospital, as well as our dedicated employees and volunteers. This recognition reaffirms our commitment to providing programs and resources that promote a healthy lifestyle for all. We look forward to continuing our efforts to enhance the well-being of our residents and build an even healthier Hainesport."

Hanover Township, 2024 Healthy Town to Watch

The Township of Hanover is a Healthy Town to Watch. After another strong program year, the MWC will use 2025 to focus on community connection, providing residents of all ages opportunities to establish strong bonds to combat loneliness and strengthen mental wellness.

"This recognition reaffirms our commitment to the total well-being of each of our residents. We look forward to providing engaging, comprehensive programs, activities and events that will enhance their lives in 2025 and beyond," said Mayor Thomas "Ace" Gallagher.

Township of Berkeley Heights, 2024 Healthy Town to Watch

The Township of Berkeley Heights has received a Healthy Town to Watch designation for the second year in a row. Residents are offered a variety of opportunities not only to enhance their physical health, but also to participate in inclusive and diverse community events.

"We are excited to once again be named a Healthy Town-to-Watch by the Quality Institute," said Mayor Angie Devanney and Township Council Vice President Susan Poage. "We believe our community is becoming a leader in the area of mental,



emotional, and physical well-being, as evidenced by the many activities organized by the Mayor's Wellness Committee, and other Township committees and groups. Our increased focus on our residents' well-being and happiness is being felt throughout our community and is quickly becoming contagious. We hope to serve as a model for other towns to emulate and strive to receive the top Healthy Town designation in 2025."

Township of Edison, 2024 Healthy Town to Watch

After receiving its first designation in 2023, the Township of Edison has achieved a silver level designation in 2024. The Township integrated Conversation of Your Life programming into its work to support healthy aging initiatives in the community.

"I am proud that Edison Township has earned the 2024 Healthy Town-to-Watch designation for 2024, building on our 2023 Healthy Town Up-and-Coming status. These accomplishments reflect our continued commitment to programs that support the health and well-being of our residents," said Mayor Sam Joshi. "The MWC has been instrumental in helping us assess and enhance local initiatives, including the Mayor's Bike Tour, Farmers Market, disability dances, senior services, and more, that benefit both the physical and mental health of our community. These events and services celebrate our diversity and promote social connectedness and community engagement throughout Edison."

2024 Healthy Towns Up-and-Coming

Borough of Merchantville, 2024 Healthy Town Up-and-Coming

Merchantville achieved its first Healthy Town Up and Coming designation. Offerings such as a community farmers market, 5K race, and a health fair engaged residents in opportunities to participate in activities promoting health and community connectedness.

"The Borough of Merchantville is honored to be recognized for the first time as a Healthy Town Up-and-Coming. We are proud of the efforts by our Board of Health members to lead Merchantville residents in activities and programs that encourage

healthy habits,” Mayor Edward Brennan. “The Borough is eager to continue its efforts and further invest in opportunities for our community to access education and activities that prioritize physical health, mental health, and overall wellness. Upcoming enhancements to Merchantville’s multi-use path will improve access for all to safely walk, run and cycle, encouraging physical activity alongside our neighbors.”

Borough of Rutherford, 2024 Healthy Town Up-and-Coming

Rutherford Borough has been designated a 2024 Healthy Town Up and Coming. One new program this year was a free event called Porchfest, which had local bands play on the porches of several residences and businesses. Not only did this bring the community together and showcase the arts but also encouraged walking from one site to the other and provided an opportunity for exercise and fresh air.

“Rutherford is very proud to be recognized for our efforts to provide healthy opportunities to our residents throughout the year,” said Mayor Frank Nunziato

City of Linden, 2024 Healthy Town Up-and-Coming

The City of Linden achieved a Healthy Town Up and Coming designation in their first year seeking an award. Through the recreation department, health department, and other partnerships, the city offered a variety of health and wellness opportunities to a diverse group of residents.

“The City of Linden is thrilled and honored to receive the Healthy Town Up-and-Coming award. This recognition celebrates the progress we've made in prioritizing our residents' well-being through initiatives that promote healthy lifestyles,” said Mayor Derek Armstead. “This achievement is a direct result of the partnerships and collaboration within our community. We are deeply grateful for the support of our residents, businesses, and organizations who have worked alongside us to make this vision a reality. Together, we are building a healthier future for Linden.”

Borough of Emerson, 2024 Healthy Town Up-and-Coming



Borough of Emerson earned its Healthy Town Up and Coming designation through its commitment to community engagement and education. The Community Conversations series is a cornerstone of the MWC and fosters open discussions on mental health, substance use, and healthy eating. This series left residents feeling informed, supported, and connected to their community and resources.

“The Borough of Emerson is thrilled to receive our 2nd recognition as a Healthy Town Up-and-Coming from the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute. In 2024, we greatly expanded our program offerings to engage with more of our residents and plan to do even more in 2025. During my tenure, I am happy to say that Emerson has successfully broadened our reach throughout the community and made good on our promise to help Emersonians live safer, healthier, and have a more vibrant quality of life,” said Mayor Danielle DiPaola.

Township of Maple Shade, 2024 Healthy Town Up-and-Coming

A first-time applicant, the Township of Maple Shade earned a Healthy Town Up and Coming designation by offering residents a health fair, free mobile vaccinations, technology education and intergenerational social supports.

“We are proud to announce that the Township of Maple Shade has been designated as a Healthy Town Up-and-Coming for 2024. Maple Shade joined the MWC in 2024 and hit the ground running by providing our residents with programs, events, and resources to keep them healthy and well throughout the year,” said Mayor Heather Talarico. “The MWC has provided our Recreation Department with the valuable content and support needed to assist with this wellness initiative for our Township. We have been able to host various health fairs, township events and presentations to our residents of all ages. The mayor’s office and the Department of Recreation are honored to continue this mission as we enter year two with the MWC. We are excited to see what we can accomplish in years to come.”

Township of Morris, 2024 Healthy Town Up-and-Coming

The Township of Morris has received its first Healthy Town Up and Coming designation. Involvement in county level data collection and analysis allowed the

MWC to be responsive to resident needs. A focus on older adults addressed health and wellness concerns of one of the Township's more vulnerable populations.

"Morris Township is honored to be recognized by the Quality Institute as a Healthy Town Up-and-Coming. We are proud to participate in the MWC led by our Health Administrator, Elizabeth Zalme. Liz has prioritized collaboration with many of our partners to focus on the health and well-being of our residents," said Mayor Donna Guariglia. "The importance of exercise/fitness, healthy eating habits, socialization, outdoor recreation, and mental health awareness will ensure our citizens maintain a balanced lifestyle. We want to continue to have a positive impact on the community's overall health and quality of life and will work to achieve the Healthy Town designation."

Township of Nutley, 2024 Healthy Town Up-and-Coming

After reinvigorating its MWC, the Township of Nutley has received its first designation since 2010, earning a Healthy Town Up and Coming award. Collaborations with local partners are key to the Township providing a wide range of health and wellness activities for residents.

"As Mayor of Nutley, I am proud to announce that we have achieved a Healthy Town Up-and-Coming designation for 2024. This designation showcases our commitment to enhancing health and wellness for all Nutley residents through various initiatives supporting mental and physical health, community blood drives, health screenings, veterans mental and physical health, addiction recovery resources, resources for combating domestic violence, and economic stability for veterans and individuals with disabilities, just to name a few," said Mayor John V. Kelly, III. "We look forward to continuing our collaboration with local stakeholders and the MWC for future Healthy Town designations in the years to come."

For More Information

To learn more about the MWC, visit: <http://www.njhcqi.org/MWC> or contact Julie DeSimone at jdesimone@njhcqi.org.



About the Mayors Wellness Campaign

The Mayors Wellness Campaign is a program of the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute in partnership with the New Jersey State League of Municipalities. The program empowers mayors across New Jersey with evidence-based tools, strategies, and support to champion health and wellness in their communities.

About the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute

The New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute's (Quality Institute) mission is to improve the safety, quality, and affordability of health care for everyone. Our membership comes from all stakeholders in health care. Together with our 100 plus members, we are working towards a world where all people receive safe, equitable, and affordable health care and live their healthiest lives.

[LinkedIn](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Bluesky](#) | [YouTube](#)