



# GMPHP NEWSLETTER

OUR NEWS AND YOUR STORIES



ACCESS TO WELLNESS

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

HOUSING/BUILT ENVIRONMENT

MATERNAL CHILD

Four workgroups developing the next Community Health Improvement Plan 2025

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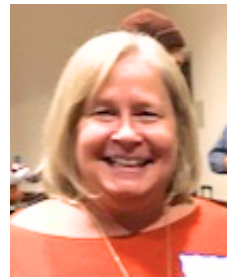
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## DEVELOPING A CHIP

As we noted in the fall issue, our Community Health Assessment (CHA) was presented to the community and Community Advisory Board (CAB) in September, and the members selected 4 priority areas that should be addressed: 1) Behavioral Health/ACEs 2) Access to Wellness 3) Housing/Built Environment and 4) Maternal/Child Health. Seventy-four CAB members met October 8th and selected a goal for each workgroup, and then developed objectives with indicators that would meet those goals. Each of the groups met again in December to fine tune the objectives, and are now working on the actions that their organization would like to add to the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). This is a year long process, but we are fortunate to have so many proactive partners who see the value of creating thoughtfully developed strategic plans. Over and over I heard people reflecting that they are more aware of other partners in the county, and that they do not feel like they are working in a silo. See page 7 for the draft goals and objectives that partners are developing.

## MEET OUR 2025 GMPHP BOARD

**PRESIDENT: DIANE GRILLO**  
**PRESIDENT ELECT: JEREMYE COHEN**  
**SECRETARY: JILL SWANSON**  
**TREASURER: Dr. KAM MAGHAZEHE**



We would like to thank Steve Papenberg for his year of service as President of the GMPHP. Steve is a retired health officer, and he brought a wealth of experience and knowledge to discussions. He will continue on the Board as a Community Member.

At the January 8th Board meeting, Diane Grillo was elected as the incoming President, and Jeremye Cohen was elected as President Elect. Jill Swanson will continue as the Secretary, and Kam Maghazehe will continue as Treasurer.

Diane Grillo is a founding member of the GMPHP, and is the Vice President of Health Promotion at RWJB Hamilton Hospital.

Jeremye Cohen, FACHE, is the Vice President of Strategy and Business Development at Capital Health.

Jill Swanson is a founding member, and is the Health Officer at the West Windsor Health Department.

Dr. Kam Maghazehe, is the Strategic Initiatives Manager at Capital Health.

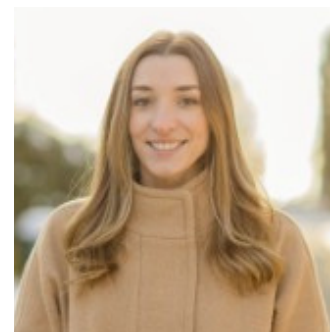
The GMPHP Board thanks these members for volunteering to carry on the GMPHP mission to improve the health of Mercer County residents.

## PASSING THE BATON

**Carol Nicholas** has been with the GMPHP since 2015, and will be retiring in January. She has had the pleasure of working with our partners on five Community Health Assessments and Improvement Plans. “It has been energizing working with so many passionate people who are committed to improving the lives of their clients. I will miss all of the wonderful people and friendships that have been built over the years.”

The GMPHP is pleased to announce that **Mackenzie Koval** MSW, will be starting with the GMPHP January 6th, 2025 as the new Executive Director. Mackenzie is a dedicated public health professional with extensive experience in managing programs, community engagement, and public health research. Mackenzie’s background includes overseeing food program operations at HomeFront and managing studies at Penn Medicine focused on behavioral interventions that promote healthy eating habits and prevent nutrition-related chronic diseases.

In her current role, Mackenzie contributes to public health studies, collaborating with community partners to design, implement, and analyze projects that advance health outcomes in Mercer County. Mackenzie is passionate about fostering innovation and collaboration in public health, leveraging her experience to build healthier, more equitable communities.



## JFCS of Greater Mercer Distributes 50,000th Bag Through Mobile Pantry

On November 25th, JFCS distributed its 50,000th bag of food through its mobile pantry. The JFCS mobile pantry launched in January 2020 and scaled up quickly when the COVID-19 pandemic took hold of our community. During the worst of the pandemic, mobility proved critical to ensuring those who were hungry could have access to nutritious food, without leaving their homes or neighborhoods.

The mobile pantry makes 30+ monthly stops at established community partner locations including churches, affordable housing, housing for adults with disabilities, daycares, schools, and more. The 50,000th bag distribution was representative of the reach and collaborative

nature of the JFCS program at this stop at the First Presbyterian Church of Hightstown which serves a community dinner from Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK). Over 100 families received a hot meal before picking up their bag of groceries from the JFCS mobile pantry. Through a special fundraising drive, JFCS was also able to provide Thanksgiving pies to each family at this stop.

JFCS food programs, which include onsite and mobile food pantries as well as senior nutrition services, have helped more than 8,400 people in the past year, and collectively have seen an almost 40% increase in service, through bags delivered and meals served, compared to 2023.

**Pictured: Partners from the NJ Office of the Food Security Advocate, Mercer Street Friends, and Trenton Area Soup Kitchen joined JFCS leadership to mark the milestone bag distribution.**



**SAVE**  
*the*  
**DATE**

**MARCH 18, 2025**  
**2-4 PM**

**SPRING CAB MEETING**

**Network with our partners and hear the  
Community Health Improvement Plan progress**

**RSVP To Mackenzie by March 10th**  
**projectdirector@gmphp.org**

**Location: Capital Health Conference Center**  
**51 Scotch Road, Ewing, NJ 08628**



**Capital Health Turkey Drive November**



**Capital Health Flu clinic**



## “EMPOWERING COMMUNITY” TRAINING



### MERCER STREET FRIENDS STAFF COMPLETING “FUTURES WITHOUT VIOLENCE” TRAINING

CAB partner, **Younity**, formerly Womanspace, is the leading organization in Mercer County serving victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence with crisis support, resources and prevention education. Younity serves over 10,000 survivors annually through our hotlines, response teams, counseling services, safe house, transitional housing, court advocacy, and our community education, prevention and outreach programs. Our Empowering Community Initiative is a series of focused presentations, over a series of months, where we train our community partners to recognize the signs, symptoms and impact of domestic violence, sexual violence and strangulation on adults, children and families. We are in the midst of our **Empowering Community** training with Mercer Street Friends (see picture) and we are eager to work in collaboration with other community partners to create a safer Mercer County for all. For more information contact Sheilagh at: 609-394-0136 or make a request via email to [info@younitynj.org](mailto:info@younitynj.org)

## MERCER COUNTY HEALTH SERVICES

The Mercer County Division of Public Health became a 317 provider in September 2024 to provide vaccines free of charge for uninsured and underinsured adults throughout the county. The health services team held numerous flu and COVID-19 vaccine clinics in several municipalities including Trenton, Hightstown, East Windsor, Ewing, Hamilton, West Windsor, Pennington and Lawrence. Vaccine clinics were conducted in partnership with a variety of community organizations such as Arm in Arm, RISE, Latino Festival of Hightstown, Trenton Saves Opioid Overdose Response Team/Mercer Council, Mercer County Corrections, Latin American Legal Defense and Education Fund (LALDEF), and multiple public libraries. The vaccine clinics have been highly successful with over 200 vaccinations administered to target populations. Resources such as health education materials, wound care and hygiene kits, winter gloves, CPR masks, and COVID-19 test kits are provided during these events. The health services team also provides wound care in conjunction with vaccinations on a weekly basis at the Rescue Mission of Trenton.





## NJ HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION SUPPORTING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

For health navigators, the health insurance open enrollment deadline each January is like New Year’s Eve and the Super Bowl all rolled into one. The clock is ticking as they help individuals and families find the best insurance plans to meet their needs. What’s not always recognized is that their work never stops. Helping New Jerseyans access healthcare resources is a year-round pursuit. And for the New Jersey Hospital Association – a GMPHP partner – it’s also part of the mission to improve the health of New Jerseyans. “NJHA’s health navigators are our ‘boots on the ground’ to help New Jerseyans access the healthcare resources they need,” said NJHA President and CEO Cathy Bennett. “Good health is shaped by social determinants of health as much – or moreso – than healthcare services, so it’s important to meet people where they live, work and play.” Health insurance support is a key part of the NJHA navigators’ work. That includes helping shoppers during the annual open enrollment period for the Get Covered NJ marketplace, which continues through Jan. 31.

In addition, enrollment into NJ FamilyCare continues year-round, and the navigators also help individuals who qualify for special enrollment periods or face significant life changes – like welcoming a new baby or changing jobs – that can impact their insurance coverage. The NJHA navigator team of Meghan Blair, Vernon Hall, Michael Mimms and Cathya Rodriguez holds certifications in several areas, including mental health first aid instructor, health coach, certified prevention specialist and more. Mimms and Hall are both U.S. Veterans who are part of the original squad of NJHA navigators with a special focus on supporting Veterans. All of the navigators also play key roles in NJHA’s Mental Health First Aid Training initiative designed to support Veterans and other underserved groups in understanding the signs and symptoms of mental health distress and connecting with services in the community.

Partnerships are an essential part of this work. Along with NJHA’s 400 members spanning hospitals, nursing homes, home health and other providers, the health navigators partner with the State of New Jersey, public health agencies and community-based organizations including GMPHP to build a support system for healthy communities. Connect with the NJHA navigators team via email at:

**COVERNJ@njha.com or online at [www.njha.com/COVERNJ](http://www.njha.com/COVERNJ).**

### Local Health Departments Prepare the Community for Respiratory Illness Season

Every fall, local health departments across Mercer County campaign to minimize respiratory illnesses in the community with a focus on populations most at risk for serious complications. According to the Centers for Disease Control, respiratory virus such as Flu, RSV and COVID-19 are responsible for millions of illnesses and thousands of hospitalizations and death in the United States annually. A key strategy employed by public health is increasing vaccination opportunities for residents and ensuring access by locating clinics in easily accessible locations throughout communities.



#### CUMULATIVE QUICK STATS

Local Health Departments in Mercer County  
2024 Vaccination Campaign | September – December



**114**

VACCINATION CLINICS OFFERED

**3,511**

VACCINATIONS PROVIDED

**118**

HOMEBOUND RESIDENTS SERVED



For more information on how to access a vaccination clinic, please contact your local health department. Scan the QR code for the Local Health Department Directory.





## CJFHC Staff Awarded National Honors from Family Connects International

Jointly nominated by **CJFHC** and the **New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF)**, Anicia Weekly-Roman, Community Alignment Specialist for Mercer County, and Ashley Watson, Community Alignment Specialist for Middlesex County, received top honors at the 2024 Community Alignment Specialist (CAS) Awards presented by Family Connects International. These awards recognize exceptional dedication to connecting families with critical resources and support.

Anicia Weekly-Roman earned the prestigious **2024 Case Conference Advocate Award** for her deep community knowledge, ability to identify service gaps, and commitment to building partnerships that uplift families. “The moment you meet Anicia,” colleagues note, “you feel a sense of home. Her passion and positivity are contagious.” Anicia has spearheaded essential initiatives such as an Employment & Resource Fair and a Food Pantry for Postpartum Families, while also ensuring transportation accessibility for families. Her efforts in linking families to housing, employment, and nutrition resources have transformed countless lives.

Ashley Watson received the esteemed 2024 Community Connector Award, honoring her creativity, community knowledge, and talent for building meaningful connections. “Ashley’s creativity and dedication shine in everything she does,” colleagues say. A former Maternal-Child Health Community Health Worker, Ashley co-leads the Community Advisory Board (CAB) with over 60 partners, including WIC and Early Intervention. She has developed educational calendars covering topics like SIDS Prevention and Mental Wellness and has pioneered unique outreach strategies, engaging families through barber shops, laundromats, and more.

Anicia and Ashley exemplify the missions of Family Connects, Connecting NJ, and CJFHC by aligning resources, fostering community engagement, and advocating tirelessly for families.

## CONVENIENT NEW MEDICATION DISPOSAL SITES

In an effort to get drugs out of the hands of our youth or medication abusers, CAB member **Mercer Council on Alcohol and Drug Addiction** is pleased to list the pharmacies that have added a medication disposal box to their pharmacy departments. It was nice to see people have used this one pictured so much that it is full! Here are sites listed on the DEA website. Don't forget that every police department in Mercer County also has a box. Keep them coming!



Bus Name	Address	City, State Zip
NEW JERSEY CVS PHARMACY, L.L.C.	2721 BRUNSWICK PIKE	LAWRENCEVILLE, NJ 08648
WAL-MART PHARMACY 10-5012	1750 NOTTINGHAM WAY	HAMILTON, NJ 08619
NEW JERSEY CVS PHARMACY, L.L.C.	1100 LIBERTY ST.	TRENTON, NJ 08611
ACME MARKETS INC	953 ROUTE 33	HAMILTON SQUARE, NJ 08690
WALGREEN EASTERN CO., INC.	1096 ROUTE 33	HAMILTON, NJ 08690
NEW JERSEY CVS PHARMACY, L.L.C.	1099 RTE. 33 HAMILTON SQUARE	HAMILTON, NJ 08690
CAPITAL HEALTH COMMUNITY PHARMACY	2 CAPITAL WAY	PENNINGTON, NJ 08534
NEW JERSEY CVS PHARMACY, L.L.C.	1320 PARKWAY AVE.	EWING, NJ 08628
NEW JERSEY CVS PHARMACY, L.L.C.	1 SUNNYBRAE BLVD	TRENTON, NJ 08620
ACME MARKETS INC	4400 SOUTH BROAD STREET	TRENTON, NJ 08620
NEW JERSEY CVS PHARMACY, L.L.C.	350 PRINCETON HIGHTSTOWN RD	WEST WINDSOR, NJ 08550
NEW JERSEY CVS PHARMACY, L.L.C.	881 STATE HWY 206	PRINCETON, NJ 08540
NEW JERSEY CVS PHARMACY, L.L.C.	4 SCHALKS CROSSING RD,	PLAINSBORO, NJ 08536
NEW JERSEY CVS PHARMACY, L.L.C.	350 RTE 130,	EAST WINDSOR, NJ 08520
WAL-MART PHARMACY 10-3266	839 ROUTE 130 NORTH	EAST WINDSOR, NJ 08520

### Enrollment Period for State Rental Assistance Program Opens in January

Need help with your rent? The State Rental Assistance Program will accept pre-applications for the [rental assistance waitlist](#) from Monday, January 13, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. through Friday, January 31, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.



Applicants must be at least 18 years old (or an emancipated minor) and must be New Jersey residents to apply. 6,000 eligible households will be selected through a lottery system and placed on a waiting list to be eligible to receive vouchers as they become available.

### QR CODE TO HELP FIND FREE NALOXONE



# DRAFT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES 2025-2027

The four groups spent hours developing their Goals and Objectives this fall, and now they are meeting to add the actions that their organization will contribute supporting the objectives. We hope to be finished early 2025.

Priority Area	Goal Statements	Objectives
<b>Priority 1: Mental &amp; Behavioral Health</b>	Goal 1: Mercer County nourishes the mental health and wellness of all, promoting a healthier community.	1.1: Increase awareness of and connection to available mental health services across the lifespan by 2027.
		1.2: Increase mental health education and skills building for non-mental health professionals by 2027.
		1.3: Increase community knowledge on mental health stigma, prevention, and harm reduction by 2027.

Priority	Goal	Objectives
<b>Priority 2: Access to Wellness</b>	Goal 2: All in Mercer County have equitable access to physical, social, and economic resources to achieve their own optimal health and wellness.	2.1: Increase enrollment/referrals to assistance programs to support the cost of healthcare services by 2027.
		2.2: Improve access to nutritious food and other supplemental resources to meet/align with individual cultural and financial needs by 2027.
		2.3: Increase convenient, affordable, accessible transportation options to key destinations in Mercer County (for food/ healthcare) by 2027.
		2.4: Increase the number of linguistically and culturally competent resources and personnel along the healthcare continuum.
		2.5: Reduce the impact of chronic disease for individuals most at risk (Black, LGBTQ+, Asian, and Hispanic) by 2027.

Priority	Goal	Objectives
<b>Priority 3: Housing &amp; Built Environment</b>	Goal 3: Everyone in Mercer County has a place to feel safe and call home in a thriving community.	3.1: Increase community-based support for home affordability by 2027.
		3.2: Decrease unsafe housing units/conditions by 5% by 2027.
		3.3: Increase the number of Vision Zero activities implemented by Mercer County municipalities by 20% by 2027.
		3.4: Increase the number of open spaces available for outdoor activity in communities in need by X% by 2027.
		3.5: Increase awareness of the resources that exist to obtain and maintain stable housing (developmental) by 2027.

Priority	Goal	Objectives
<b>Priority 4: Maternal &amp; Infant Health</b>	Goal 4: All birthing people and infants in Mercer County have equitable access to quality care and resources across the continuum to improve health outcomes.	4.1: Increase access to prenatal care services to reduce the risk factors for maternal and infant mortality by 2027.
		4.2: Increase the number of partnerships among community-based organizations to streamline resources and build supportive networks for families by 2027.
		4.3: Increase health education opportunities to promote health and well-being of all birthing people, infants, and families in Mercer County by 2027.
		4.4: Increase and diversify the number of professionals working in the community to bridge the gap in access to maternal and infant health care by 2027.



UPCOMING PROGRAMS OUR PARTNERS SPONSOR

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**CAPITAL HEALTH'S**  
**COMMUNITY BABY SHOWER**



**Saturday, April 5, 2025**

**11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

War Memorial, 1 Memorial Drive, Trenton, NJ 08608

Women who are pregnant or recently delivered (infants up to three months old) and their support person are welcome to enjoy **FREE**:

- ... Lunch
- ... Raffles
- ... Giveaways
- ... Food from our Mobile Food Pantry with Arm in Arm
- ... Blood Pressure Screenings
- ... Information Tables, including staff from Capital Health Maternity Services (Labor and Delivery, Childbirth and Parenting Education and Lactation) and Pediatric Services, as well as multiple Trenton community-based organizations

**Registration information coming soon!**



This program is supported through the generosity of the Capital Health Foundation.

**REVITALIZE YOUR NEW YEAR:**  
**PELVIC HEALTH & FITNESS ESSENTIALS**

**JOIN US for an empowering conversation and take the first step toward a stronger, healthier you!**

**Date:** February 6, 2025  
**Time:** 1-2 pm (ET)  
**Format:** Virtual

**Program Description**

Kick off the new year with feeling strong, confident and in control of pelvic health to take the first step toward a stronger, healthier self in 2025 and beyond.

- Why your pelvic floor matters and how it supports your daily life
- Simple, effective exercises to build strength and support
- Tips to alleviate incontinence and bladder urgency
- Relationship with cervical health and screening guidelines

**Register today using the link or QR code:**

<https://www.workcast.com/register?cpak=2870454456998680>



**Presenter**

Specializing in pelvic health, perinatal exercise and menopause support, Chelsea has over 12 years of experience as a personal trainer, coach and group fitness instructor. She holds certifications in NASM Women's Fitness, Pregnancy and Postpartum Corrective Exercise and Pelvis Pro. Chelsea is dedicated to helping women navigate life's major transitions with functional movement and holistic wellness.



**Chelsea Wargo, CPT**  
Owner & Founder  
Herself Maternal  
Wellness & Fitness

**For more INFORMATION**  
**CALL 908-237-2328 or VISIT:**

<https://www.hunterdonhealth.org/services/hunterdon-mercer-chronic-disease-coalition>



Partnering to Improve Health for All.



**Cancer.org for US Military Veterans**



Your service and sacrifice are deeply appreciated. The American Cancer Society is here to help you take charge of your health. Visit [cancer.org/veterans](https://cancer.org/veterans) to explore resources that can help support you and your family.

**Understand your risk for cancer.**

United States military veterans often face unique health challenges. In some cases, veterans might have a higher risk for some cancers. This may be because of **exposure to substances, chemicals, and hazards** during service.

Be aware of cancer risks through screening. Cancer screening can help find cancers earlier, when they may be easier to treat. [Find out what screening tests are recommended for your age.](#)

**Lower your risk for cancer.**

Information and resources from the American Cancer Society can help you:

- Eat healthy and get active.
- Lower your alcohol intake.
- Quit tobacco through services like SmokefreeVet or Stay Quit Coach.

**Access resources for US veterans with cancer.**

If you're a US veteran with cancer, explore care-related resources and information.

- Health insurance information
- Financial support
- Diagnosis and treatment options
- Housing and transportation during treatment.



**Streamline your care with My HealtheVet.**

My HealtheVet is an online resource that connects you to your health care team and helps you manage your care. Through My HealtheVet, you can easily access the US Department of Veterans Affairs pharmacy, contact your health care team, manage your appointments, view your health records, and more. Scan the QR code to learn more.

To learn more visit [cancer.org/veterans](https://cancer.org/veterans).

©2024, American Cancer Society, Inc. No. 081014 Rev. 9/24 Models used for illustrative purposes.

**Crossroads4Hope**  
A NETWORK OF CANCER SUPPORT  
Taking On Your Cancer Journey. Together.™

**Annual Conference in Cancer 2025**

*Empowering Adolescent and Young Adult Advocates*

March 21st, 2025 | 8:30am – 3:30pm Hyatt Regency, New Brunswick, NJ

Join Crossroads4Hope for a transformative day dedicated to equipping professionals working with youth and young adults in any capacity with vital knowledge and tools to better serve this fastest growing cancer population.

**Conference Topics:**

**Keynote Speaker**



**Matthew Zachary**

9 Year Cancer Survivor | Founder: Stupid Cancer  
Host: Out of Patients Podcast | CR4H Member

**AYA Identity Development and Key Life Milestones**

**Navigating Transitions in Care**

**HPV Vaccine as Cancer Prevention**

**Diagnosis Disclosure Decisions**

**Technology's Role in Cancer Care**

**Supporting Siblings and Peers Through a Cancer Diagnosis**

**Supporting Young Adult Caregivers**

**Conference Details:**



- **FREE** registration
- Complimentary parking, breakfast, and lunch provided
- Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and Professional Development Hours (PDHs) for various professional certifications (approval pending)

Please register online at: [crossroads4hope.org/acoc-25/](https://crossroads4hope.org/acoc-25/)  
Contact Information: 908. 658. 5400 | [rwerner@crossroads4hope.org](mailto:rwerner@crossroads4hope.org)



## HELP PROMOTE EARLY CHILDHOOD LEAD TESTING

Lead poisoning can cause learning disabilities, behavioral problems, and, at very high levels, seizures, coma, and even death, according to the CDC. “No level of lead is acceptable, so timely screening is essential to connecting children with care and families with abatement and remediation tools,” said Health Commissioner Dr. Kaitlan Baston. “By raising awareness and with more testing, we can intervene earlier and children can get help faster to avoid the long-lasting impacts of lead poisoning.”

New Jersey requires that every child’s lead levels to be tested at 12 months old and 24 months old, or at least once before they turn six if the first two dates are missed.

**As a coalition, let’s help get the word out!**

### STAY LEAD-FREE TEST TWICE BEFORE 3





Test your child for lead at 1 and 2 years, or as soon as possible before the age of 6.

Some sources of lead:

-  Imported goods
-  Leaded pipes
-  Lead-based paint

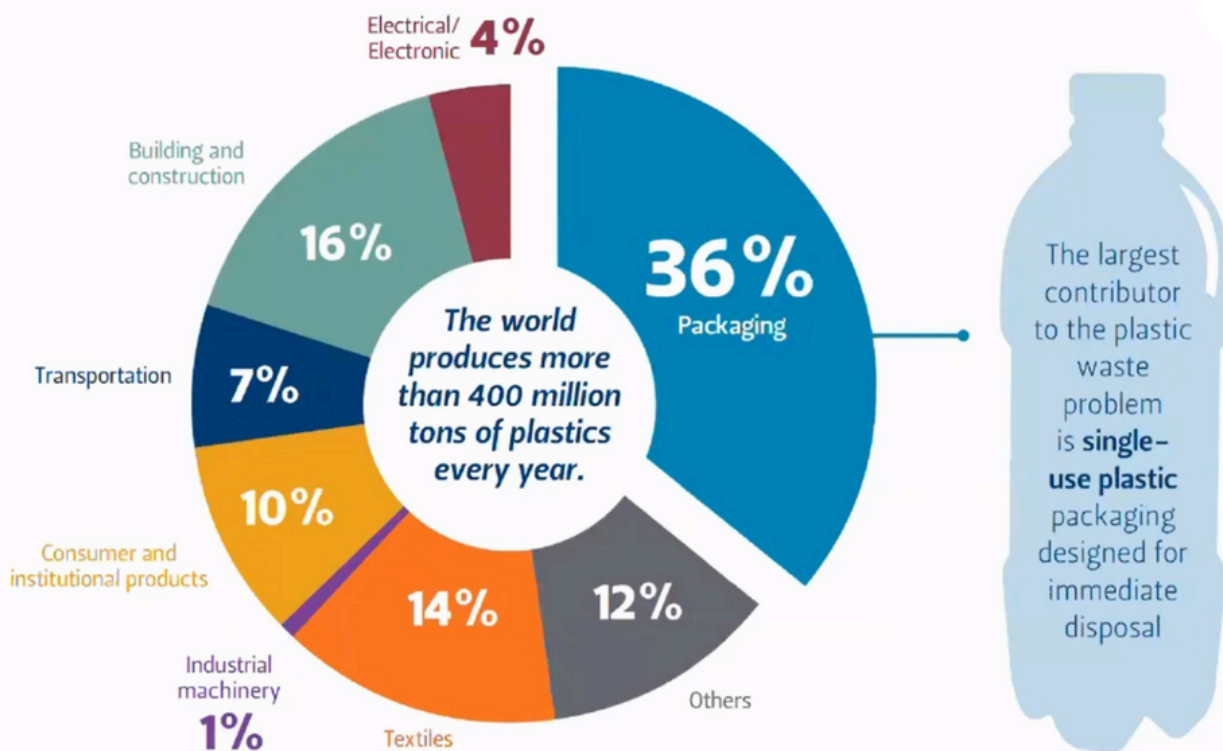


Local health departments offer free testing for uninsured or underinsured kids.



[nj.gov/health/childhoodlead](http://nj.gov/health/childhoodlead)

## Global Plastic Production by Industrial Sector, 2015



Source: R. Meidl adapted from United Nations Environment Programme, Single-use Plastics: A Roadmap for Sustainability (Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Environment Programme, 2018).