

It is my pleasure to express our strong support for RWJBarnabas Health and the renewal of State-appropriated funds to RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH) in the FY 2027 New Jersey State Budget on behalf of United Way of Greater Newark (UWGN). Founded more than 100 years ago, UWGN serves Newark and 13 surrounding municipalities with a mission to build communities where every individual and family can thrive with dignity and opportunity. The support made possible through these State-appropriated funds allows RWJBH to invest directly in community-based initiatives—like our Newark Asset Building Coalition (NABC)—that expand access to financial stability resources, improve health and economic mobility, and strengthen the social determinants of health across Newark.

Our work aligns deeply with RWJBH's commitment to addressing the structural and socioeconomic barriers that drive poor health outcomes. In Newark, more than 64% of households meet the ALICE threshold, and far too many working families cannot meet their basic needs despite employment. Through NABC—a citywide, multi-partner network—UWGN leads a comprehensive financial stability strategy that ranges from debt reduction and credit counseling to workforce development, healthcare enrollment, housing navigation, and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance services. This hub-and-spoke model reaches residents across every Newark ward and provides tailored support delivered by trusted anchor institutions. RWJBH's longstanding role as an anchor healthcare institution, and its dedication to improving community well-being, aligns directly with our efforts to increase the financial resilience of at least 157,000 ALICE households by 2028.

RWJBH's partnership strengthens our capacity to reach residents who are most vulnerable to financial shock—conditions that directly influence health outcomes. Last year, our coalition partners collectively served more than 10,000 residents through VITA services, 1,000–2,000 residents through financial coaching and counseling, and several hundred more through housing navigation and workforce programs. These services equip households to reduce debt, prevent foreclosure, increase emergency savings, and build long-term assets such as homeownership, education, and small business development. With RWJBH addressing the health impacts of chronic financial stress—the “weathering” effect—the synergy between our work and theirs is both powerful and necessary.

Without continued State investment in RWJBH, the ripple effects for Newark's working families would be significant. RWJBH's ability to sustain community partnerships, outreach, and support for programs like ours would be diminished, limiting how many residents we can serve, reducing access to essential financial stability services, and constraining the shared progress we are making toward reducing Newark's ALICE population. These funds are not abstract—they directly translate into expanded services, increased capacity, and more residents gaining the tools to achieve financial and health stability.

We express our sincere appreciation and gratitude for our partnership with RWJBarnabas Health and their unwavering commitment to building and sustaining healthier, more economically secure communities. Continued State investment in RWJBH's community partnerships is essential to sustaining the programs that directly benefit families across Newark and New Jersey.

Sincerely,

Catherine P. Wilson
President and CEO
United Way of Greater Newark