



## \*\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\*\*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 16, 2021

**MEDIA CONTACT**

[media@uhnj.org](mailto:media@uhnj.org)

973-634-82987

### **FOUNDATION FOR UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL RECEIVES GRANT FROM NJEDA'S *SUSTAIN & SERVE NJ* PROGRAM**

***State Grant Program Supports Small Business, Allows University Hospital to Combat Food Insecurity and Build Connections with Small Business in Newark and Environs***

**NEWARK, NJ** – The Foundation for University Hospital, the hospital's not-for-profit organization that serves as its primary charitable fundraising arm, today announced that it is the beneficiary of a \$100,000 grant from the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA), as part of the agency's *Sustain & Serve NJ* program. The NJEDA launched applications for *Sustain & Serve NJ* in late 2020 to support restaurants negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The program's goal is to purchase of 1.5 million meals from at least 160 New Jersey restaurants in at least 69 municipalities across 12 counties.

“Over the past six years since its founding, the Foundation for University Hospital has built a culture of community-based philanthropy to promote health, wellness and education among Newark residents. Throughout the pandemic, that has meant a keen focus on fighting food insecurity across the entire University Hospital community, including front-line workers, caregivers, and, of course patients,” said **New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy** as part of his June 14, 2021 COVID-19 press conference ([click for video](#)). “Working with the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, the Foundation is now a beneficiary of the *Sustain & Serve NJ* program, meaning that it is partnering with local restaurants to provide meals, while maintaining their mission and supporting Newark's small businesses. Through this program – through providing these meals, through the *Sustain & Serve NJ* program, they have deepened their relationship with their community, especially with the surrounding restaurants that have participated in the program.”

Since April 2021, more than 3,000 meals have been provided to patients expressing food insecurity, including patients ready to be discharged, but would rather stay admitted to get their next meal. Meals are also offered to the homeless who come to the Emergency Department simply because they are hungry and to family members and caregivers waiting for the diagnoses of their loved ones, and victims of violent crime under the Hospital's care. University Hospital also



honored more than 1,000 nurses throughout Nurses Month by serving them a hot meal during their shift and a treat platter to their unit.

“The *Sustain & Serve* program has had an incredible impact in addressing food insecurity across our University Hospital community. This includes our patients, their caregivers and even our staff. We are grateful to the New Jersey Economic Development Authority for addressing food insecurity and supporting local restaurants at the same time,” said **Jess Backofen, Executive Director of The Foundation for University Hospital**. “Small business owners that surround our Hospital have become our partners throughout the pandemic. Now that the Foundation has engaged these businesses, and they have created the infrastructure to distribute meals at scale, continuing this program will allow the Hospital to feed the food insecure, and continue to provide a token of our appreciation to our healthcare heroes on a long-term basis.”

“We've realized many of our patients want to stay at the hospital, even after they're ready for discharge, because they have genuine concerns about where their next meal is coming from,” said **Dr. Anthony Rosania, Vice Chair Clinical Operations, Department of Emergency Medicine at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School**. “Through this grant, we now offer them a nutritious, hot meal and send them home with a bit of added comfort and security while simultaneously making a real impact on patient safety.”

*Sustain & Serve NJ* funds directly support expenses tied to bulk purchasing of meals from New Jersey-based restaurants. Each grant recipient receives a grant of between \$100,000 and \$2 million to fund the purchases, and then the recipient distributes the meals at no cost. The NJEDA initially announced *Sustain & Serve NJ* in December 2021 as a \$2 million pilot program. However, due to enormous interest from organizations and restaurants throughout the state, NJEDA dedicated an additional \$12.4 million in Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds to support eligible applications.

“This program could not have come at a better time for small businesses and community members,” said **DJ Luccarelli, owner Sweetwaters Coffee & Tea of Newark**. “I couldn't be happier to help put a smile on the faces of the healthcare heroes at University hospital who have been working tirelessly for our community during this pandemic.”

“*Sustain & Serve* has given us the opportunity to maintain our employees during these difficult economic times. More importantly, we're welcoming guests into our restaurants who wouldn't otherwise be able to dine with us during these difficult times,” said **Adenah Bayoh, owner of IHOP of Newark**. “When you think about people experiencing food insecurity, it's easy to imagine them homeless, but in reality, this could be a neighbor or your friend.”

###



### **About The Foundation for University Hospital**

The Foundation for University Hospital raises funds to advance University Hospital's mission of improving healthcare, education, and wellness in greater Newark. Contributions to The Foundation for University Hospital sustain and enhance the critical clinical and community outreach programs of University Hospital. For more information about how you can contribute and make a difference, please contact the Foundation office at (973) 972-1873.

### **About University Hospital**

University Hospital is part of one of the nation's leading academic medical centers and is the Level 1 Trauma Center for Northern New Jersey. Located at University Heights in Newark, University Hospital is a principal teaching hospital of Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences and a regional resource for advanced services across many medical specialties. For more information about University Hospital, please visit [www.uhnj.org](http://www.uhnj.org).