



Keeping New Jersey Healthy



Health Commissioner Cathleen Bennett visited Liberty Lake Day Camp in Bordentown on July 7 to distribute CDC-developed coloring books to children and talk to them about how they can protect themselves from mosquito bites.



Deputy Health Commissioner Dr. Arturo Brito visited the Perth Amboy WIC clinic on July 6 to speak to primarily Spanish-speaking pregnant women and clients.

#ZapZika Campaign Remains Robust During Summer Season

By Cathleen Bennett, Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Health



Summertime at the Jersey Shore means spending time outdoors with family members and friends at backyard barbeques, picnics in the park and bonfires on the beach. The summer season also gives families an opportunity to enjoy tropical getaways. But as we learn more about the Zika virus and risks to pregnant women and their unborn children, it is important for New Jersey residents and travelers to protect themselves from mosquito bites wherever they go.

While New Jersey’s mosquito season is still in full swing, the risk of local transmission of Zika here remains low. So far, our state has seen 100 confirmed travel-related [Zika cases](#). As the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) investigate this evolving virus and new details emerge from locally-acquired cases in Florida, the Department’s ongoing #ZapZika public education campaign remains robust. The Department remains committed to ensuring everyone knows how to best protect themselves and their partners.

To help kick start the Olympics with Zika prevention tips, a [2-minute segment](#) for NBC’s NY Live aired on Aug. 3, featuring interviews with Health Commissioner Cathleen Bennett and Deputy Health Commissioner Dr. Arturo Brito. Topics included prevention and protection methods, key messages for travelers and residents to protect themselves, and resources for viewers to find more information. As part of the NBC advertising that coincided with the Olympics, a 30-second [Spanish PSA by Dr. Brito](#) ran on screens at check cashing stores in the northern part of the state. Our poster was also displayed in the lobbies of premier office buildings in northern New Jersey, placed in high-traffic areas such as near the front desks or in elevators. The poster was also on display in PATH stations and train platforms. This education effort, coinciding with the Olympics, built upon our ongoing statewide awareness campaign.

As part of the #ZapZika campaign, our radio and NJTransit advertising was extended throughout the summer. The Department has also hosted a series of trainings, webinars and conference calls that have reached thousands of our health care facilities, county and local public health, maternal and child health partners. Translated materials can be found on our [Zika website](#). This summer, the Department distributed Creole posters at migrant farm worker camps in South Jersey.

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Breastfeeding Report Card
 Progressing Toward National Breastfeeding Goals
 United States, 2016



Children's Home Society of New Jersey's Mercer WIC Program has earned a 2016 Loving Support Award of Excellence in recognition of their exemplary breastfeeding promotion and support practices. Children's Home Society is one of only 15 recipients of the gold level award in the Mid-Atlantic region. The gold level application assessed the effectiveness of the agency's peer counseling program by reviewing their breastfeeding support partnerships within the community, the lactation support provided to WIC mothers and babies, program evaluation techniques, and training and continuing education opportunities for staff.

Department Highlights Success During National Breastfeeding Month

New Jersey is seeing significant progress in improving breastfeeding rates. The 2016 CDC Breastfeeding Report Card showed that our exclusive breastfeeding rates have increased since last year's report:

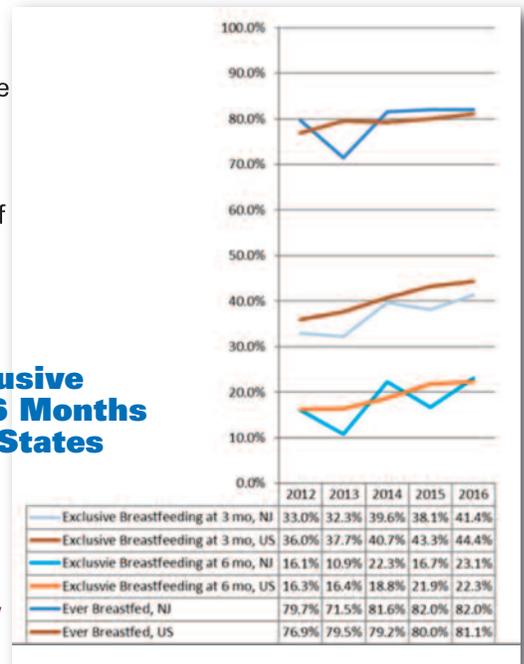
- ❖ Exclusive Breastfeeding at 3 months increased from 38.1% to 41.4%
- ❖ Exclusive Breastfeeding at 6 months increased from 16.7% to 23.1%

The Department has been focusing on improving breastfeeding rates by partnering with the New Jersey Hospital Association, hospitals, providers and community based organizations. The Department has supported hospitals in the implementation of the World Health Organization and United Nations Children's Fund **Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative**. New Jersey now has seven Baby-Friendly designated hospitals: Inspira Medical Center Elmer, Capital Health Medical Center - Hopewell, CentraState Medical Center in Freehold, Jersey Shore University Medical Center in Neptune, and most recently Overlook Medical Center, Morristown Medical Center and Southern Ocean Medical Center. Twenty-two hospitals are working toward achieving this designation.

Breastfeeding is also promoted through the **New Jersey Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program**. WIC offers breastfeeding classes and counseling. Women who exclusively breastfeed their infants receive the largest WIC food package to support their nutrition while nursing.

As a part of National Breastfeeding Month, several communities in New Jersey hosted the **Global Big Latch** which takes place annually over two days between August 1st and August 7th. Participating locations included businesses and local parks in Red Bank, Butler, Montclair, Bloomfield, Highland Park, Clementon, and Haddonfield. The Global Big Latch is an initiative to promote and support breastfeeding where women gather at registered locations around the world together to breastfeed and offer peer support. Last year, a total of 36,502 people participated globally.

Ever Breastfed and Exclusive Breastfeeding at 3 and 6 Months New Jersey and United States



Birth years 2009-2013

Source: National Immunization Survey, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Health and Human Services



From left to right: Health Commissioner Cathleen Bennett; Trevor Weigle, President of the NJ Association of County and City Health Officials; and DEP Commissioner Bob Martin at the Zika workshop on June 22.



Assistant Commissioners Lisa Asare, Family Health Services, and Christopher Rinn, Division of Public Health Infrastructure, Laboratories and Emergency Preparedness, helped package Zika prevention kits at the DOH warehouse in Trenton.

Commissioner’s Message, *continued from page 1*

With a strong network of partners, the Department has been successful in developing its response plans and launching initiatives such as development of Zika prevention kits for at-risk pregnant women. These will be distributed through WIC clinics and FQHCs, with local health departments and other partners assisting with outreach and education.

We are continuously encouraging the public to use EPA-registered insect repellent, wear long sleeves and pants, eliminate standing water from their properties, and stay informed. On June 22, the Department partnered with the New Jersey Association of County and City Health Officials and the state Department of Environmental Protection to host a day-long Zika workshop with local health partners and mosquito control agencies. About 200 attendees discussed ways to further educate their communities and shared lessons learned.

We have a long and successful history of partnering with DEP and local public health and healthcare partners. Assistant Commissioner Christopher Rinn joined DEP’s Office of Mosquito Control Coordination at two events in Middlesex and Camden and helped stock a mosquito-breeding marsh in Edison. Dr. Brito participated in a Zika [podcast](#) with DEP Deputy Commissioner David Glass. Together we continue encouraging residents to eliminate mosquitoes and advising travelers to avoid mosquito exposure for three weeks following their return from a Zika-impacted area.

We are also collaborating with other sister agencies to get the word out. The Department’s Communicable Disease Service partnered with the state Department of Education to attend a school security symposium in Salem County on Aug. 3 to share Zika preparedness information with district administrators, principals, teachers and security personnel.

Dr. Brito – a bilingual pediatrician – has met with primarily Spanish-speaking clients, pregnant women and staff at WIC clinics in Paterson, Perth Amboy and Atlantic City to share updated guidance and protection methods. The 24/7 Zika hotline (available at 1-800-962-1253) has taken nearly 400 calls from the public and providers over the past four months, and translators are available to facilitate calls.

We encourage you to check our Zika website frequently for updates and follow the #ZapZika campaign on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to get the most current information and “know before you go.” On [our homepage](#), you can find our most recent travel-related case count, which links to CDC resources. We also have a series of YouTube videos and PSAs on our website that educate residents about [protecting against mosquito bites](#) and [mosquito-proofing their homes and backyards](#).

To zap Zika, New Jersey relies on the help of its partners. Let’s continue sharing prevention messages and educating residents about Zika-associated risks so they can best protect themselves and their families.



Assistant Commissioner Christopher Rinn and Captain Rob Tosatto at the Emerging Infectious Disease workshop.

Emerging Infectious Disease Training Prepares Medical Reserve Corps

The Middlesex County Medical Reserve Corps and the Middlesex County Office of Health Services hosted an Emerging Infectious Disease Training Summit at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville on June 28.

Guests included MRC Unit coordinators, their volunteers, and key federal, state, and local stakeholders. The Federal Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) cooperative agreement provided funding for the summit.

Dr. Dina Fonseca, Rutgers University Center for Vector Biology, lead the event as the keynote speaker. The summit included skill building sessions focused on the psychology of crisis/risk communication, vector control, cultural competency, incident command for public health emergencies, psychological first aid, and disease investigation and interviewing skills.

"The New Jersey Medical Reserve Corps Emerging Infectious Disease Summit provided hands-on training for MRC volunteers, unit leaders and stakeholders on key topics related to preparedness and response for infectious diseases," said Captain Robert Tosatto, Federal MRC Program Director. "Moreover, it showcased the state's dedication to advanced training and planning, especially in light of Zika virus."

Forms Now Available for Adoptees to Apply for Birth Records

The Department has made forms available for adoptees to apply for their birth certificates and learn more about their family's demographic, medical and social/cultural histories. Applications are now being accepted. Records will start being released January 1, 2017. The availability of these forms marks another step toward lifting the seal on thousands of records and allowing adoptees to learn more about their family makeup while maintaining the rights of biological parents who wish to remain anonymous.

The FAQs, application and instructions can be found on the [Department's website](#). Those who may request copies of birth certificates are adult adoptees; direct descendants, siblings or spouses of adopted persons; adoptive parents, legal guardians or other legal representatives of adopted persons; or state or federal government agencies for official purposes.

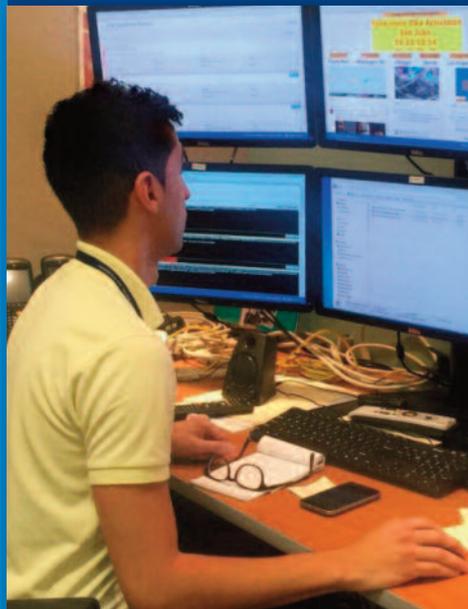
Applicants will receive uncertified copies of birth certificates on file with the Department's Office of Vital Statistics and Registry. Copies are for informational purposes only and cannot be used for legal proof of identity or citizenship, or as a substitute for an official birth certificate.

In August 2015, the [Department began implementing](#) the new adoption law signed by Governor Chris Christie. A birth parent is permitted to redact his or her personal identifying information from their biological child's original birth certificate if the adoption was finalized before August 1, 2015.

Birth parents who choose to have their identifying information redacted must submit this request by December 31, 2016 but may rescind redaction requests at any time. These forms are available on the [Department's website](#).



Managing the Zika Response



Luis Torrens at his work station in the Puerto Rico Department of Health's EOC managing the logistical needs of the response.

Luis Torrens of the Department's Public Health Infrastructure, Laboratories and Emergency Preparedness (PHILEP) division recently spent five weeks in San Juan with the Puerto Rico Department of Health as an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Manager in response to the emerging Zika Virus.

Torrens was responsible for managing the logistical needs of response teams, which included Epidemiology, Maternal Health, Travelers' Health, Vector Control and Communications.

"My tasks ranged from very simple tasks like assessing equipment needs like measuring tape to more moderate ones as managing the staffing structures and needs of the response, and handling all the inquiries from CDC Headquarters in Atlanta," Torrens said. "It also included more complicated needs like working with budget limitations for a Zika communication campaign, logistical matters regarding laboratory testing capacity and private-public partnerships efforts to obtain and distribute window screens around the island."

This isn't the first time Torrens has been on the road. In the last two years, he has been deployed to Newark International Airport and Sierra Leone as a part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Ebola response.

Torrens said the thing that struck him the most about his experience was that the general population wasn't worried about Zika.

"While the CDC and the Puerto Rican Department of Health felt that Zika was a public health threat, many members of the population felt the warnings were exaggerated and even worse, were hurting the tourism industry," he said. "Of course pregnant women understood the risk and were very concerned, and took our Zika control initiative very seriously. I spoke to a pregnant woman that told me she sprays her repellent like it's perfume."

SAVE THESE DATES!

Video Submission, Sept. 23

Twitter Chat, Sept. 30
@NJDeptofHealth

Post Photos All Month Long!

Facebook.com/NJDeptofHealth

#NJPrepares

September is Preparedness Month Are you ready?

Don't wait. Communicate!

All month long, we encourage you to post a photo demonstrating how you prepare for an emergency using only six words to convey your preparedness plan. 1 photo, 6 words! Use hashtag #NJPrepares and tag the Department on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

This year, the Department will be sponsoring a preparedness video contest. First place will go to the agency or group that produces the best preparedness video. Submissions will be accepted on the Department's Twitter and Facebook pages until Sept. 23. There will be two, first-place winners chosen: one for public health and another for health facilities. Winning videos will be announced Sept. 30 and posted to the Department's website.

The Department will also be partnering with the New Jersey Offices of Emergency Management and Homeland Security and Preparedness to host a Twitter chat on Sept. 30 — National PrepareAthon Day. Follow along using hashtag #NJPrepares and check the Department's Twitter feed.



DOH Cross Collaboration a Promising Practice



The Association of Health Facility Survey Agencies recognized the Department's cross division collaboration to ensure good infection control in New Jersey's healthcare facilities as a promising practice. The Division of Health Facilities Survey and Field Operations partnered with Communicable Disease Service to provide a Safe Injection Ambassador training program to all 100 members of the survey staff. The program provided surveyors with a basic foundation for recognizing safe injection practices and increased participants' ability to identify potential infection control breaches.

Surveyors included nurses, pharmacists, dietitians, and building inspectors. These surveyors inspect all licensed and/or certified healthcare facilities including hospitals, ambulatory surgery centers, hospice and longterm care.

This is the second infection control education program that was developed in conjunction with the Communicable Disease Service. The first program was an education session that included training on protocols to refer infection control breaches identified during survey activity to the State Healthcare Associated Infection Coordinator and/or State Epidemiologist.

Survey staff indicated that the training has provided consistency between survey teams. Increased education will ultimately increase the quality of care provided to the patients and residents of New Jersey. The Division's effective use of infection control educational opportunities and collaborative relationship with the Communicable Disease Service promotes the goals and objectives of the Survey and Certification program by ensuring staff have the most current infection control information and resources accessible to them.

Back to School with Vaccinations

In preparation for back-to-school, parents should speak with their health care providers to make sure their children are vaccinated. When children are not vaccinated, they are at increased risk for illness and can spread disease to others in their play groups, child care centers, classrooms and communities.

National Immunization Awareness Month is an annual observance in August to raise awareness about the important role vaccines play in preventing serious, sometimes deadly, diseases. Childhood vaccines protect against 14 serious diseases by the age of two. New Jersey has reached the [Healthy People 2020](#) target for polio, MMR, hepatitis B and varicella immunizations. It is also recommended that children get vaccinated against rotavirus and hepatitis A, and that everyone six months of age and older annually receive the flu vaccine.

Preteens and teens also need booster shots to help stay protected from serious diseases like tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends children who are 11 to 12 years of age receive the tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (Tdap), meningococcal conjugate (MenACWY), and human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccines to protect them during adolescence.

For information about New Jersey's immunization requirements for child care, preschool, school, and college, visit <http://nj.gov/health/cd/imm.shtml>.



National Health Center Week Celebrated Statewide

The Department of Health and the New Jersey Primary Care Association joined with all 23 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) across the state to celebrate National Health Center Week (NHCW) – August 7 -13 – at more than 50 locations. Free medical and dental screenings; health education programs on topics including HIV, nutrition, diabetes and the Zika virus; food and entertainment were offered to New Jersey residents of all ages.

The theme for NHCW 2016 was “Celebrating America’s Health Centers: Innovators in Community Health.” The goal of health centers across the nation is to improve the health of underserved communities and provide access to comprehensive, culturally-competent, quality, primary care to those populations at greatest health risk. Millions of Americans – one in every 13 – receive care at health centers in the 50 states, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

In New Jersey, FQHCs provided more than 1.5 million medical and dental patient visits for more than 481,000 individuals during the state Fiscal Year ending June 30. These services are provided regardless of patients’ ability to pay, and fees are based on a sliding scale.

This year, New Jersey celebrated National Farmworkers Day on Aug. 11 in conjunction with National Health Center Week by reaching out to migrant workers and providing free health screenings, medical care, and health education. For example, Southern Jersey Family Medical Centers’ mobile medical unit held a National Farm Worker Appreciation Day at a cranberry farm in Burlington County.

For more information on New Jersey’s FQHCs, visit <http://www.nj.gov/health/fhs/fqhc/index.shtml>.



Assistant Commissioner Lisa Asare joined the New Jersey Primary Care Association for the kickoff of National Health Center Week in Burlington.



DOH Chief of Staff Gregory Myer joined Zufall Health Center on Aug. 10 for the launch of their new dental van and ribbon cutting of their newly renovated Somerville site to commemorate National Health Center Week.



Southern Jersey Family Medical Centers’ mobile unit provided free health screenings and medical check-ups to migrant farm workers at a South Jersey cranberry farm during National Health Center Week.



NJ Secretary of Agriculture Douglas Fisher, Westmont Farmers Market Coordinator Doug Kelly, Health Commissioner Cathleen Bennett, and Haddon Township Mayor Randall Teague at the Westmont farmers' market on Aug. 10.



Audrey Heist, AtlantiCare's Director of Health Engagement; Health Commissioner Cathleen Bennett; and Betsy Ryan, President and CEO of the New Jersey Hospital Association, attended a [free health care screening](#) for veterans on June 2 in Wildwood.



Community Outreach & Events

Summer 2016

- July 1** Commissioner Bennett toured Kennedy Hospital in Cherry Hill.
- July 8** Commissioner Bennett toured Shore Memorial Hospital in Somers Point.
- July 11** Commissioner Bennett visited Monmouth County Health Department in Freehold.
- August 8** Assistant Commissioner Lisa Asare joined the New Jersey Primary Care Association for the kick off of National Health Center Week in Burlington.
- August 9** Commissioner Bennett attended CAMCare's Health Center Week celebration in Camden.
- August 10** Chief of Staff Gregory Myer attended Zufall Health Center's ribbon cutting of their newly-renovated health center and unveiling of a new dental van in Somerville.
- August 10** Commissioner Bennett joined Secretary of Agriculture Douglas Fisher to celebrate National Farmers Market Week.

DOH Poster a Finalist at CSTE Annual Conference

The Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) selected Marija Borjan, Research Scientist in the Occupational Health and Surveillance Unit, as a finalist for an Outstanding Poster Presentation Award at their 2016 Annual Conference. The poster summarizes efforts among staff in the Environmental and Occupational Health Surveillance Program to evaluate NJDOH's syndromic surveillance system to track a variety of occupationally-related emergency room visits throughout the state via Epicenter, the department's existing real-time surveillance system. This evaluation demonstrated that real-time identification of occupational chemical illnesses allows for immediate notification to federal and state partners who enforce worker protection to reduce exposures. Notable chemical exposures included toluene vapor, six cases of pesticide exposure, and carbon monoxide poisoning. It also showed that the majority of work-related incidents resulting in an emergency department visit were due to falls.

Congratulations to:

Dr. Miriam Schachter, DOH's Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) Newborn Screening Post-Doctoral Fellow, won the Best Poster Award at the APHL Annual Meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Dr. Schachter presented her work on the evaluation of unsatisfactory specimens submitted to the NJ Newborn Screening Laboratory. Her presentation will serve as an example for other state programs and will help them improve their newborn screening efforts.

Congratulations to:



Alison Gibson

Alison Gibson, former Deputy Chief of Staff, who assumed the role of Deputy Commissioner of Health Systems. She has been working at the Department for more than 13 years. Prior to joining the Department, she gained over 20 years of extensive clinical and management experience at tertiary care hospitals in inpatient and outpatient services. She studied English Literature and received her Master’s Degree at the University of Dundee in Scotland before she began a career in nursing.

Gibson started as a nurse at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh in Scotland. She also earned a Bachelor’s of Science in Nursing and Masters of Public Administration at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey.

“I always liked the science of it. No matter what, you are always helping people, and the decisions we make are based on helping people,” she said.

As Deputy Commissioner of Health Systems, Alison oversees inspections and enforcement for approximately 2,200 licensed health care facilities, the Certificate of Need program, and major hospital funding programs such as Charity Care, Graduate Medical Education, and the Delivery Systems Reform Incentive Payment Program (DSRIP).



Victoria Brogan

Victoria Brogan, was named Deputy Chief of Staff after serving as the Department’s Director of the Office of Legislative Services for more than five years. She has more than 16 years of state government experience. She previously served as Senior Research Associate to the New Jersey State Senate Republican Office and Policy Advisor to the New Jersey Assembly Republican Office. She was responsible for preparing strategic detailed background memos for legislative members on federal and state policy issues, and negotiated with outside interest groups and Governor’s Counsel on legislation.

“I have a passion to work with internal and external partners to implement public health in all policies,” she said.

She has studied at Assumption College where she received a Bachelor of Arts in Politics.



Lisa Asare

Lisa Asare recently assumed the role of Assistant Commissioner of Family Health Services. Lisa has worked in the Department for 18 years in several different divisions including the Center for Health Statistics, Office of Minority and Multicultural Health, and Family Health Services. Most recently, she served as Executive Assistant to the Office of Deputy Commissioner in Public Health Services, for about three years.

“I’m very happy to return to Family Health Services and to focus on population health,” she said.

As Assistant Commissioner, she oversees five units which provide extensive public health programs and services to promote and protect health including Maternal & Child Health, Primary Care & Rural Health, Special Child Health & Early Intervention Services, WIC Nutrition Services and Community Health & Wellness.

Lisa attained a Bachelor’s degree in economics from the University of Toronto and received her Master’s in Public Health from the Rutgers School of Biomedical and Health Sciences, formerly the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey.

“I look forward to coordinating response to complex health issues that involve other state agencies,” she said.

'Cancer Matters'
Brought To You By:

RUTGERS
Cancer Institute
of New Jersey

Proton Therapy for Human Malignancies

By Atif J. Khan, MD

Since the turn of the 20th century, doctors have used radiation therapy for the treatment of human cancers. In May 2015, the physicians at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey began treating patients at the Laurie Proton Therapy Center at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJ), which is the flagship hospital of Rutgers Cancer Institute. Conventional x-ray (or photon) therapy uses x-rays that are essentially the same as those used in the dentist's office or for a chest x-ray. However, the x-rays used for radiotherapy are much higher in energy and can be aimed more precisely to target a specific area of the body. Nonetheless, x-rays do have an inherent limitation: they deposit more energy dose along their entry path and continue to deliver that energy beyond the target area ("exit dose"). Thus, it is typically necessary to treat patients with many different "beams" coming from different angles. These beams can be positioned in a way to target the intended area and "concentrate" the dose; however, this method can result in unintended, low-dose radiation to surrounding areas.

Protons are different from photons in that protons deliver most of their dose at a certain depth based on their energy, and create far lesser entry dose, and essentially no "exit dose." This property makes protons very attractive for use in some human tumors. This form of treatment can be beneficial in patients requiring a second course of radiation therapy, children with tumors, and in other situations that call for highly precise radiation therapy.

The Laurie Proton Therapy Center is home to the world's third MEVION S250 Proton Therapy System, which fits into a room only slightly larger than a standard radiation machine – unlike previous generation proton machines which took up a city block. The reduced cost associated with this modern and streamlined technology will help improve access to proton therapy for patients. While proton therapy is not for everyone, this form of treatment allows us to address exceptionally challenging cases. And as one of only a handful of active sites with proton therapy in the United States, we are investigating the optimal delivery of proton therapy so that we can further advance the understanding of this unique technology.



Atif J. Khan, MD, is the Medical Director at the Laurie Proton Therapy Center at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital and an Associate Professor of Radiation Oncology at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.



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