



Paterson > Health & Wellness

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Paterson Community Health Center Welcomes Bevan K. Baker as New CEO at Community Reception





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PATERSON, NJ - The Paterson Community Health Center (PCHC) officially welcomed Bevan K. Baker, FACHE, as its new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) during a special community reception on Monday.

Baker, who began his tenure on March 3, brings a distinguished record of public health leadership and a bold vision for expanding access to healthcare services in Paterson and Passaic County. The reception, hosted at Passaic County Community College, was organized by Dr. Steven Rose, President of the college; Reverend Dr. Randall M. Lassiter, Senior Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church; and the Board of Directors of the Paterson Community Health Center.

"Dr. Baker, welcome to the Paterson family," Mayor Andre Sayegh said. "For years, we've been committed to health and wellness, earning recognition as a [Healthy Town five years in a row](#). Thanks to council members who invest in our parks, pools, and public spaces, our youth and families stay active. Our vaccination

programs and the health department's mobile unit show that partnerships and collaboration matter. We look forward to being partners in progress with you. Congratulations — and thank you for your work."

"I've been here 37 years, and I've worked with many of you on countless committees—true community leaders," Dr. Rose said. "That's why this health center matters. With nearly 10,000 students, many without easy access to healthcare, this center is critical. Education is important, but when we combine it with health, faith, and community support, we truly come together. The college is ready to help however we can—space, outreach, whatever's needed. Welcome, and we're glad to have you."

A distinguished public health leader, Baker previously served four terms as Commissioner of Health for the City of Milwaukee and held senior roles across the country, including in New York, Florida, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Maryland. Before arriving in Paterson, he was Chief Operating Officer and Vice President of Research and Analytics at START Treatment and Recovery Centers in Brooklyn. He is also an Assistant Clinical Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Joseph J. Zilber School of Public Health and adjunct faculty at Marquette University and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Baker's scholarly work has focused on global health, health systems design, health equity, and community-based participatory research. His management consulting firm, Noonchi Consulting, has helped public health and business leaders across the country develop strategic policies to improve community health outcomes.

During his remarks, Baker acknowledged the leaders in attendance and emphasized the importance of collaboration between education, faith, healthcare, and government to achieve community-wide health improvements.

"I've been in Paterson for 57 days, but it took me 63 years to get here, and I believe this opportunity was destined," Baker said. "I ran toward this work because I believe in serving people, especially at their most vulnerable moments. Paterson is filled with good, hardworking people, and every day I am more certain that I am where I am supposed to be."

"In a small moment on Main Street, when strangers helped me without hesitation, I saw the true heart of this city," he added. "Faith brought me here, and with faith, we can change the way people think about Paterson, about community health, and about each other. I may not become a millionaire, but I will never starve because I have faith in people—and I am asking for your help, your trust, and your support. I promise to work harder than anyone, to advocate

for Paterson at every level, and to always put the people first. I drove 714 miles back from North Carolina to be here today with no sleep, because that's how much this community matters. Thank you for welcoming me, and I look forward to the years ahead as we work together to build a stronger, healthier Paterson."

The evening concluded with the presentation of a certificate of appreciation from the Mayor's Office to Baker, recognizing his commitment to advancing community health and wellness.

President of the Board of Directors, Joe Barbieri, summed up the collective enthusiasm: "We are thrilled to have Mr. Baker's leadership. His experience, dedication, and vision are exactly what Paterson needs as we enter a new era of growth and service."

Jillian Hudspeth, who served as Acting CEO during the transition, praised the appointment and reflected on her time leading the organization.

"Bevan has taken on a mammoth task," Hudspeth said. "I am very proud to be part of the team that brought him to Paterson. To have someone of his caliber, expertise, and experience is a major accomplishment for the Health Center. He will make a profound impact not only on PCHC but also on public health throughout the city and at the state level."

Hudspeth's leadership at PCHC came during a time of significant change. She stepped into the Acting CEO role to provide stability following the [passing of Dr. Mary Elizabeth Garner](#), the longtime head of the center and a revered figure in New Jersey's FQHC community.

"I came to PCHC to be a bridge and provide stability during a time of transition," Hudspeth said. "It was my way of saying thank you to Dr. Garner, who was such an indomitable figure in Paterson and statewide."

Hudspeth first met Dr. Garner while serving as President and CEO of the New Jersey Primary Care Association (NJPCA), the statewide organization designated by the federal government to support FQHCs through training and technical assistance.

Working closely with the PCHC Board of Directors, including Finance Chair Sharon Easton and Board President Joe Barbieri, Hudspeth helped lead the executive search committee. Partnering with Waterloo Consulting and Mitch Douglas, the search process began with 80 candidates and required prior CEO or COO leadership experience at a U.S. FQHC.

During her nine-month tenure as Acting CEO, Hudspeth focused on operational

improvements, strategic partnerships, and organizational stability. Key accomplishments include:

- **Providing stability and leadership during the transition and after Dr. Garner's passing.**
- **Working with the CFO to secure \$9 million in grant funding over three years.**
- **Bringing Labcorp services to both PCHC sites,** addressing a long-standing gap (PCHC had previously been the only FQHC in New Jersey without Labcorp services).
- **Implementing a Labcorp and eClinicalWorks (ECW) interface,** improving care coordination and efficiency.
- **Establishing a new Care Coordination and Community Outreach Department.**
- **Launching a comprehensive Orientation and Training Program** for staff.
- **Signing agreements with local and county agencies,** including the Passaic County Department of Health, Greater Bergen Community Action (Head Start/Early Head Start), St. Joseph's University Medical Center, and Rainbows of Hope, to expand maternal, cancer screening, and preventive health services.
- **Establishing a Sickle Cell Disease Care Program** with the State of New Jersey to provide specialized services for patients with sickle cell disease and their families.
- **Modernizing internal communications and policy initiatives** to strengthen organizational infrastructure.

"I am proud of the work I have achieved with my colleagues at PCHC," Hudspeth said. "But today is for Bevan."

Looking ahead, Hudspeth plans to return to her true passion—public policy and government affairs.

The Paterson Community Health Center, a federally qualified health center (FQHC) established in 1989, operates two locations in Paterson and aims to provide comprehensive, affordable, and compassionate healthcare to all residents, regardless of ability to pay.