



PRESS RELEASE

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1889 Foundation-Jefferson Center for Population Health to be established in Johnstown

(JOHNSTOWN, Pa.) – The 1889 Foundation today announced a \$7.5 million, five-year gift establishing the 1889 Foundation-Jefferson Center for Population Health in Johnstown. The Center, which is a partnership between the 1889 Foundation and the Jefferson College of Population Health of Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, will identify, quantify and develop strategies for improving the health of the citizens of Cambria and Somerset Counties. This partnership will bring an academic approach and rigor to the research that will inform the decisions and interventions made as a result of the process.

In its most fundamental sense, population health is a systematic approach to health care that aims to prevent and cure disease by keeping people healthy. Population health works to address the social and environmental factors outside the care delivery system that affect health and well-being.

“The 1889 Foundation’s mission is to support innovative programs and initiatives to transform the overall health and wellness of our community. By taking a population health approach, we have an enormous opportunity to make giant strides toward fulfilling our mission,” said James Hargreaves, board chairman of the 1889 Foundation.

Specifically, the goals of the 1889 Foundation-Jefferson Center for Population Health are:

- Connect prevention, wellness and behavioral healthcare delivery in Cambria and Somerset Counties
- Identify socio-economic and cultural factors that influence the health of the population
- Develop policies that address the impact of these factors
- Use data analysis, or “big data,” to design social and community interventions
- Recommend innovative solutions to complex public health issues

The 1889 Foundation-Jefferson Center for Population Health will be located in Johnstown. The director of the Center will also hold the Victor Heiser, MD Endowed Professorship at the Jefferson College of Population Health, the nation’s first college devoted to this area of study.

Dr. Victor Heiser, orphaned in the 1889 Johnstown flood, left town to attend and graduate from what was then known as Jefferson Medical College. He went on to become a key figure in public health, and his work is credited with saving as many as two million people across the globe.

“Dr. Heiser had a great impact on this community, and it is uniquely fitting to name the professorship in his honor,” said David B. Nash, MD, MBA, the founding dean of Jefferson College of Population Health.

The new Center has already begun forming connections with healthcare and community organizations in the region on this effort.

“According to research conducted by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Somerset and Cambria Counties are ranked the 46th and 60th healthiest, respectively, of Pennsylvania’s 67 counties,” Dr. Nash said. “That means there is much room for improvement, and we are excited to begin.”

Population health is a relatively new concept, and has been studied mostly in large urban areas. It is expected that the 1889 Foundation-Jefferson Center for Population Health will become a national model for how population health interventions can work in smaller communities.

“Ultimately, our goal is to create a measurable, multi-generational impact on the quality of life here,” said Susan Mann, president of the 1889 Foundation. “That will, in turn, have positive effects on the business climate and the vibrancy of our entire community, while lowering the cost of healthcare.”

Timeline

The \$7.5 million gift will establish the Center with an initial timeline of five years. Key steps include:

- A leading population health expert will be recruited to serve as the inaugural director for the new Center. The director, who will be located in Johnstown, will also hold the Victor Heiser, MD Endowed Professorship at Jefferson College.
- The Center’s new director will hire professional staff to support the work of the Center.
- Together, the team will conduct research, develop strategies and recommendations for interventions to improve population health, and will study the impact of those interventions.

At the end of the five years, the Jefferson College of Population Health may seek renewed funding from the 1889 Foundation to continue the partnership, as improving population health is a long-term proposition.

Today’s announcement follows the 1889 Foundation’s previous gift, a \$500,000 matching grant to the United Way of the Laurel Highlands to increase the reach and impact of the United Way’s Community Impact grants. That grant provided a dollar-for-dollar match of up to \$500,000 for the United Way’s annual fundraising campaign.

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1889 Foundation, Inc. formerly known as Conemaugh Health Foundation, was the recipient of funds from Conemaugh Health System’s sale to Duke LifePoint Healthcare in September 2014. The 1889 Foundation is dedicated to partnering within our community to identify where we can make the greatest difference in areas such as population health and disease management. The Foundation’s mission is to support innovative programs and initiatives that improve and transform the overall health and wellness of our region. For more about the 1889 Foundation, visit www.1889foundation.org.

The Jefferson College of Population Health (JCPH) is the first and only school of its kind in the country. Established in 2008, it is part of Thomas Jefferson University, a leading academic health center founded in Philadelphia in 1824 as Jefferson Medical College (now Sidney Kimmel Medical College). The College is dedicated to exploring the policies and forces that define the health and well-being of populations. Its mission is to prepare leaders with global vision to examine the social determinants of health and to evaluate, develop and implement health policies and systems that will improve the health of populations and thereby enhance the quality of life. Jefferson College of Population Health provides exemplary graduate academic programming in population health, public health, health policy, healthcare quality and safety, and health outcomes research. Its educational offerings are enhanced by research, publications and continuing education and professional development offerings in these areas. For more information, visit <http://www.jefferson.edu/university/population-health.html>.