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## Group to Focus on Newport's Health Equity Gap

*The North End and Broadway neighborhoods are getting a special focus through the Newport Health Equity Zone Collaboration.*

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NEWPORT  
**HEALTH EQUITY**  
ZONE

Newport is a community with extreme gaps. While the world knows the city as the City-by-the-Sea and a place of Gilded Age mansions and billionaires' yachts, local residents know that there are deep pockets of poverty woven through its fabric.

Among the disparities are those that relate to the health and well being of too many residents, particularly in the North End and Broadway neighborhoods.

Later this month, the Women's Resource Center along with a group of city organizations will launch a comprehensive collaboration to start addressing some of those disparities.

The WRC is one of several organizations to receive a state Health Equity Zone grant and it is being used to fund the Newport Health Equity Zone Collaboration, which has a stated goal to “not only mitigate current health disparities present in these communities, but also to empower residents with the skills needed to create community change,” according to a Monday news release.

“We often think of health as determined primarily by genetics and personal choices. When I fact social and environmental factors play a key role in determining individual health,” said Jessica Walsh, director of prevention for the Women’s Resource Center. “This project is exciting for Newport because it challenges us to work in partnership with residents to talk about these broader influences on health, to identify areas for improvement in our own community, and to determine the best strategies to make long term, positive change.”

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In their submission for the grant WRC presented a collaboration of Newport organizations who would focus on the 6 areas of impact: health, transportation, arts and culture, open space, physical and emotional health, education innovation and economic opportunities, and food access. The organizations involved are: Bike Newport, Boys and Girls Club of Newport County, Arts and Cultural Alliance, Fab Newport, MLK Center, Aquidneck Land Trust. In addition to these six core organizations, support agencies and residents, the Newport-HEZ project is also supported by Worldways Social Marketing, the Alliance for a Liveable Newport, the RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence and NewportFILM.

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“Health equity means that everyone has access to health care services, positive health outcomes and community support,”

said Rhode Island Rep. Lauren Carson. “We should all be pleased that Newport has won this award to build this multi-year project. Everyone is entitled to a long and healthy life. This program will seek to close the gaps that make some population groups more vulnerable to poor health than other groups and it will aim for the highest level of care for the residents in Newport being served by the program.”

The official launch is planned for Sept. 23 at the Florence Grey Center from 6 to 7 p.m.

The event will be open to the public and will include a brief presentation followed by a Q&A session.

The Florence Grey Center is located at 1 York St.

### **Across Rhode Island**

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