

# BERGEN COUNTY ESTABLISHES AGE-FRIENDLY TASK FORCE

*First Age-Friendly Task Force in the State of New Jersey*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Amanda Karpinski

[AKarpinski@co.bergen.nj.us](mailto:AKarpinski@co.bergen.nj.us)



**Above:** Bergen County Commissioner Vice Chairwoman Mary Amoroso, Bergen Community College President Dr. Eric Friedman, Bergen County Commissioner Thomas Sullivan, Bergen County Commissioner Chair Pro Tempore Dr. Joan Voss, Bergen County Commissioner Tracy Zur, Department of Health Services Director Hansel Asmar, Bergen County Commissioner Chairwoman Germaine Ortiz, Director of Senior Services Lorraine Joewono, and Housing Authority of Bergen County Deputy Director Michele DiIorgi stand as County Executive Tedesco displays the signed Executive Order establishing Bergen County's Age-Friendly Task Force.

**HACKENSACK, N.J.** – County Executive James J. Tedesco, III, and the Board of County Commissioners are proud to announce the creation and establishment of Bergen County’s Age-Friendly Task Force, the first countywide task force of this nature in the State of New Jersey.

The County of Bergen has been making strides to create “age-friendly” communities since 1966 with the establishment of the Division of Senior Services. In 2022, Bergen County proudly became the second county in the State to be designated as an AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities.

Senior citizens make up more than 20% of Bergen County’s population. This Task Force will advise County government on ways to enhance our communities and maintain that our seniors have access to the services and resources necessary to age in place with confidence, such as housing education, access to recreational and cultural activities, opportunities to participate in social and civic engagement, the promotion of employment and volunteerism, and access to comprehensive health care.

“This Task Force is a testament to the County’s commitment to addressing the diverse needs of our residents,” **said Bergen County Executive Tedesco.** “Together, we are promoting a higher quality of life and creating a community where our seniors can age in place with dignity, independence, and respect.”

““This Task Force represents a significant step forward in our commitment to creating communities that support the health, well-being, and independence of our aging population. We look forward to working together to build a more inclusive and supportive environment for all older residents of New Jersey with Bergen County leading the way.” **said Commissioner Chairwoman Germaine Ortiz.**

Through this pioneering initiative, the County of Bergen remains steadfast in our efforts to develop ongoing action plans to further promote and strengthen programs for our older adults.

The Task Force shall consist of at least eight members and no more than fourteen members, including a representative from the Office of the County Executive, the Director of Bergen County Department of Health Services, the Director of the Division of Community Transportation, and the Director of the Division of Senior Services, or their designee, as well as a Director of both a small-mid size Age-Friendly community and a large size AARP community within Bergen County, a representative from higher education within Bergen County, and two representatives from either a non-profit government organization that has programming that impacts our senior population that manages or operates housing/or transportation/or health care programs, and a member of the Bergen County Board of Commissioners as designated by the Chair of the Board.

The inaugural members of the Task Force include:

- Helen Archontou, CEO of YWCA of Northern New Jersey
- Dr. Hansel Asmar, Department of Health Bergen County
- Dominick Azzolini, Director of Community Transportation

- Lisa Bontemps, Westwood for All Ages
- Elizabeth Davis, Brightside Family & Age-Friendly Teaneck
- Melissa DeBartolo, Director of Human Services
- Michele DiIorgi, Deputy Director of the Housing Authority of Bergen County
- Patrick Fallon, Office of Food Security
- Dr. Eric Friedman, President of Bergen Community College
- Lorraine Joewono, Director of Senior Services
- Deborah Visconi, President and CEO of Bergen New Bridge Medical Center

**Photos:**



*County Executive Tedesco signing Executive Order No. 2024-1 establishing Bergen County's Age-Friendly Task Force.*



*Inaugural members of the Age-Friendly Task Force stand with County Executive Tedesco and members of the Board of Commissioners.*

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