

**HELP WITH
ANXIETY**



**CRISIS
SUPPORT**



**Mental
Health
FOR
ALL**



**24/7
COUNSELING**



**THERAPY TO FIT
YOUR NEEDS**



**SUPPORT
FOR ABUSE**



**NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE.
NO MATTER WHAT YOU NEED.
*NEW YORK CITY IS HERE FOR YOU.***

NYC



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Message From the Mayor



My fellow New Yorkers,

There has never been a moment in our nation's history when mental health has come to the forefront the way it has right now. The COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis that followed have tested us in so many ways. Too many New Yorkers have felt the pain of losing a family member to this virus; the stress and anxiety of a lost job; the isolation this crisis has brought to every community. Our City and our people are hurting. As we recover and write the next chapter, we must support the health and well-being of every New Yorker.

That has been the mission of this Administration since its earliest days. Seven years ago, we set out to bring all New Yorkers the physical, mental, and emotional support and resources they needed to live their best lives. We have made extraordinary strides: With NYC Care, we became the first city in the nation to guarantee health care to every New Yorker – no matter your age, background, or ability to pay. Through ThriveNYC, we started a powerful conversation in our City, helped those in every borough connect to care, and embedded mental health in dozens of city agencies and hundreds of community organizations. With the launch of NYC Well, we gave every New Yorker a place to turn to – where more than one million people have already received no-cost, 24/7 mental health support from trained professionals. And with the new Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health, this work has a permanent place in City Hall.

Now is the moment to go even further. We will go into our communities, meet New Yorkers where they are, and provide support in ways we never have before. When our fellow New Yorkers get vaccinated, we will be there with mental health support at every City site. When our young people return to the classroom, we will check in with each child and create an individualized plan to keep them on track. And when any New Yorker finds themselves in a moment of crisis, we will answer the call with a response that puts health and well-being first.

In New York City, mental health care and support is not a privilege reserved for those who can afford it. It is a human right for all. It is time to reach all New Yorkers as we build a recovery for all of us. It is time to reach our people differently, across every age and background, in ways previously thought unimaginable. It is time to make our city whole again.

Mayor Bill de Blasio

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill de Blasio".

Message From The First Lady



Dear Friends,

My father once said: “If you have your health, you have everything. Anything is possible.” And to those words I add: There is no health without mental health.

In the early days of this Administration, we announced a series of mental health town halls across New York City. In public spaces, in every borough across our City, we listened to individuals of all ages and backgrounds bemoan the stigma of even talking about mental health before baring their souls: A brother who had to leave work and drop whatever he was doing, over and over again, rushing to his sister’s side at a hospital when she was in crisis. A father who yearned to get his depressed daughter the support she needed, but didn’t know how. Every person who attended these sessions had a story about someone who struggled to get timely and appropriate help. Each story was unique, but every person had the same lament: “I didn’t know who to call.’ And sometimes ‘I didn’t know what to say.”

We recognized the intense desire for more services and support, even as we felt the relief that New Yorkers experienced as they shared their stories and realized they were not alone. We started a public conversation that our City never had before — one that continues to this day.

Our Administration launched ThriveNYC to respond directly to what we heard from hundreds and hundreds of people. Six years later, we have connected hundreds of thousands to care through newly created programs and expanded services. We have spurred innovation in how cities approach mental health, and given New Yorkers a language to talk about their emotional needs and challenges. We have learned important lessons and now, as we emerge from COVID-19, it is time to build on the foundation we have created.

Mental Health For All shows the range and depth of existing programs and our commitment to doing more to improve the health of all New Yorkers. As we move forward, we are building on the extraordinary success of ThriveNYC with the new permanent Mayor’s Office of Community Mental Health. This office will ensure that mental health is in more policy discussions, that we work with more community partners and that we continue innovation to close gaps. And beyond this new office, every City agency is invested in promoting mental health. This report illustrates evidence and intent: No matter the age, zip code, ethnicity, or gender, we want every New Yorker to be able to live their best life.

Chirlane McCray
First Lady of New York City

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chirlane McCray". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "C" at the beginning.



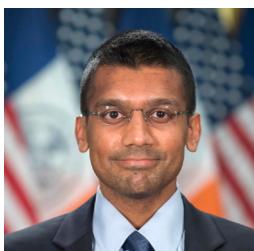
“NYC Health + Hospitals is honored to provide more than 50 percent of the critical mental health care in the City, regardless of ability to pay, immigration status, and other demographics that often make people feel excluded from comprehensive, culturally sensitive care. Over the years, the City’s public health system has worked tirelessly to ensure that every door remains open for New Yorkers suffering from mental health issues to substance use disorders and more have the affordable access they need to live healthy and full lives. We look forward to continuing this important work with our sister agencies and make sure this crucial work grows and impacts people’s lives.”

Dr. Mitchell Katz, NYC Health + Hospitals President and CEO



“At its heart, the Mayor’s Office of Community Mental Health is about serving people who would otherwise go without mental health support - a commitment shared by our partners in government and nearly 200 community-based agencies across New York City. Together, we have expanded access to mental healthcare in groundbreaking ways--a universal offer of support to all victims of violence, crime, and abuse; new clinical services embedded in schools, social service agencies, in all runaway and homeless youth residences and drop-in centers; family shelters, and centers for older adults -- and stronger connections to care for people with serious mental illness. The City’s new commitment builds on this strong foundation and takes us even further along our path to mental health for all.

Susan Herman, Director of the Mayor’s Office of Community Mental Health



“The past year has shown how our mental health is intertwined with our physical health—but this is true even when we are not fighting a pandemic. Mental Health For All is a roadmap to how we’ll get New Yorkers the support they deserve, in 2021 and beyond.”

Dr. Dave Chokshi, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene



“Since day one, we have prioritized access to mental health care for all students and fought to ensure our educators and families have the supports they need to confront the trauma caused by the pandemic. This historic investment underscores our commitment to address the social-emotional needs of our children by providing wraparound supports and services to meet them where they are. Our future is brighter when our young people are thriving.”

New York City Schools Chancellor Meisha Porter

Letter From Faith Leaders

To our fellow New Yorkers,

As faith leaders representing New York City's many diverse traditions, we stand together in celebration and affirmation of this Mental Health For All report.

From the beginning, the de Blasio Administration has prioritized mental health for every New Yorker. We are grateful that this work has always included partnerships with New York's faith communities. Our houses of worship are not only spaces for spiritual practice. For many, especially, immigrants and people of color, a church, masjid, synagogue, temple, or gudwara is the first stop for resources and support in daily life. We are often the first to tend to the mental health and wellness of our communities.

Through efforts like ThriveNYC, NYC Well, the Mental Health First Aid training, and the annual Weekend of Faith, this Administration has always made partnership a priority — and given us the resources we need to better serve our communities.

In many faith traditions, there are mandates to love our neighbors, to care for the marginalized and underserved. The passionate work of Mayor de Blasio and First Lady McCray has made these mandates just a little easier. We write to express both our gratitude and our continued commitment to ensuring all New Yorkers have access to mental health care. It is our hope and prayer that our City will continue to prioritize the mental health of all New Yorkers.

Minister Chika Onleilove Alston, Racial Justice Organizing Fellow, Interfaith Center of New York

Rev. Terry Toria, Project Hospitality

Debbie Almontaser, PhD (Pending), Muslim Community Network and Yemini American Merchants Association:

Most Rev. John O'Hara, Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of New York

Bishop Orlando Findlayter, New Hope Christian Fellowship

Peter B. Gudaitis, M.Div., Executive Director & CEO, New York Disaster Interfaith Services

Father Michael Callaghan, C.O., Board President, Emergency Shelter Network

Mohammad Razvi, Council of Peoples Organization

Rabbi Amichai Lau-Lavie, Founding Spiritual Leader, Lab/Shul

Rev. Wendy Kelly Carter, Mount Olivet Baptist Church

Masum Ali, New York Muslims United for Civic Engagement

Valerie Harris, Mt. Olivet Baptist Church of Hollis

Rev. Terry Lee, Community Concerns Network

Rev. Hector Lozada, Las Maravillas del Exodo

Delware Hossain, Muslim Ummah of North America

Chaplain Naomi Jones, Riverside Church

Mosaab Sadeia, Islamic Leadership Council of New York

Karl Anderson, Mount Calvary Holy Church

Morrias Quissico, St. Mark's United Methodist Church

Mohinder Singh. Baba Makhan Shah Lobana Sikh Center

Pastor Danilo Archbold, Mt. Sinai C.O.G.I.C

Antoinnette (Toni) Donegan, First Central Baptist Church

Denise Betty, Triumphant Life Ministry

Rev. Althelia H. Pond, Mount Morris

Ascension Presbyterian Church



Mental Health in America: A Crisis Long Before COVID

Long before the COVID-19 pandemic, we faced a mental health crisis in this country. Millions of Americans experience mental illness, substance misuse, and daily struggles with anxiety or depression — yet the appropriate care has not been there when they need it. Above it all, we face a fundamental stigma around mental illness that dates back generations, which has discouraged many who are struggling from seeking the help and support they need.

For far too long, these challenges have been inadequately addressed at the national level. Our federal government has taken certain steps forward: The National Mental Health Act in 1946, inspired by veterans returning from World War II, recognized the stress and trauma that so many had been through and established the National Institute of Mental Health. The Community Mental Health Act of 1963 helped deinstitutionalize mental health services and moved us towards community-based care, but lacked the funding to fully deliver on its promise. Making this legislation possible were dramatic advances in the field of mental health, as the medical community better understood the role of practices like talk therapy and medication for those in need. Most recently, the 21st Century Cures Act took steps to provide mental health support for families and address the growing opioid crisis.

But we have never had a comprehensive federal strategy to guarantee mental health care to every American. The challenge has fallen on cities, states, and localities to care for their people.

2015-2020: New York City Steps Up To The Plate

Under the de Blasio Administration, New York City has embraced the mission to support our people. The City has guaranteed health care to every New Yorker, which includes mental health support; closed critical gaps; brought support to those most in need; and given New Yorkers simple, direct ways to connect to care.

Key milestones include:

- **2015:** We launched the groundbreaking **ThriveNYC**, a decisive turning point in the way New York City approaches mental health and substance misuse. ThriveNYC is the most comprehensive mental health roadmap of any city or state in the nation, and today ThriveNYC programs are implemented by more than a dozen City agencies and nearly 200 non-profit partners.
- **2016:** We launched **NYC Well**, a ThriveNYC program and a crisis, information and referral helpline that provides no-cost, 24/7 mental health support to New Yorkers in more than 200 languages. As of today, more than one million New Yorkers have received immediate support from NYC Well counselors and peer specialists, as well as referrals to ongoing care.
- **2019:** We launched **NYC Care**, guaranteeing quality, affordable access to health care, including mental health care, to New Yorkers regardless of their immigration status or ability to pay. The program expanded to all five boroughs in 2020.
- **2019:** We expanded **Social & Emotional Learning and Restorative Justice** to all public schools Citywide. Today, every child in our public schools is taught to process their emotions in the same way they learn to read or multiply – and learns the skills to interact with peers, friends, and family in a healthy way.

COVID-19: Going Even Further

The past year has shined a light on a simple truth: Mental health is part of everyone's life. The COVID-19 crisis has touched every family — a lost job, the stress of isolation, or most painfully, the loss of a loved one. We have seen racial inequities exacerbated by the pandemic. We have seen the toll that isolation and a lack of connection can have in our lives.

As part of our pandemic response, we brought more support to New Yorkers, including:

- **New mental health teams to respond to moments of crisis:** We announced that, for the first time in the New York City's history, mental health and physical health experts will now respond to 911 mental health calls that do not involve weapons or an imminent risk of violence, starting with a pilot in Harlem.
- **Expanding NYC Care citywide:** We delivered on our promise to guarantee health care access to all New Yorkers citywide, launching NYC Care in Manhattan and Queens ahead of schedule to reach all five boroughs.
- **COVID-19 Centers of Excellence:** We opened two Centers in hard-hit communities across the City to bring comprehensive short- and long-term care to New Yorkers recovering from COVID-19, including mental health support, with a third Center on the way.
- **Social, Emotional, and Academic behavioral screenings in schools:** We announced universal mental health check-ins for New York City public school students as they return to the classroom – helping our educators better understand their needs and well-being.

- **COVID-19 Community Conversations (3C):** We created virtual presentations on the impact of COVID-19 on mental health, anxiety, trauma, grief and coping skills as a transition from our successful Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training in the communities hit hardest by COVID, targeting community members and empowering community leaders to provide support and care for others in their neighborhoods.

The Next Evolution: Mental Health For All.

As we emerge from the COVID-19 crisis, mental health is being talked about in our nation like never before. More Americans are having open, honest conversations – in a way that would have been impossible to imagine at that first gathering just a few years ago. More local leaders are baking mental health into their policies and budgets, in ways we could have only dreamed about. And in Washington, D.C., we have an Administration that stands ready to provide the federal support we have needed.

This report is an evolution – the next right and significant steps, building on the extraordinary progress of ThriveNYC, NYC Care, and efforts in our schools. Our goal isn't only to provide access; It is to go into



our communities, and reach New Yorkers where they are. This evolution continues our work to tear down the structural inequities laid bare by COVID-19, in partnership with our Taskforce on Racial Inclusion & Equity. And it helps us build a New York City in which mental health is baked into every policy and facet of our lives.

In this report, you will see the comprehensive mental health support provided to every New Yorker – broken into five groups we are focused on as we recover from COVID-19:

- 1. Our students and young people.** The past year has had a profound effect on our children – who have been subject to isolation, different forms of learning, and loss in their families and communities.
- 2. Our communities of color.** COVID-19 didn't create inequities in mental health care – it revealed and exacerbated them. We will continue to bring additional resources to communities that have been underserved for decades.
- 3. New Yorkers who want or need help for substance misuse.** The opioid crisis hasn't gone away – and substance misuse has, for many, gotten worse during COVID-19.
- 4. New Yorkers with serious mental illness (SMI).** The COVID-19 pandemic has made it more difficult to stay connected to care. New initiatives help avert crises and provide long-term care that promotes real stability in people's lives.
- 5. Every New Yorker who needs help.** Everyone has been affected in some way by this past year, and our mission is to go into our communities to ensure every person has the support they need.

Key new policy highlights.

New programs and expansions include:

- **Creating the Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health.** We will launch a new mayoral office, dedicated to mental health, as a permanent fixture in City government – working across our schools,

hospitals, homeless shelters, and beyond to deliver mental health support and services to every New Yorker.

- **Universal screenings and support for our students.** We will expand our Social, Emotional, and Academic behavioral screenings to every public school student Citywide – and offer more support to families through ParentCorps, Parent University and NYC Well allowing us to provide early assistance to those in need.
- **Universal mental health connection at City vaccination sites.** As we vaccinate hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers in the coming weeks at City sites, we will provide mental health check-ins, resources, and connections to care as needed.
- **Creating a Community Behavioral Health Academy.** Too often, underserved communities don't have enough behavioral health providers and professionals to support mental health needs. The City will create a training Academy, equipping a broad range of City agency staff and social service providers with the skills they need to interact with the public, and provide support and referrals when necessary.
- **Going even further to address the opioid crisis.** We will deepen the groundbreaking work of HealingNYC — driving more awareness of the dangers of substance use disorders, reducing harm, and providing more holistic treatment.
- **Keeping those with serious mental illness connected to care.** With more mobile teams at the ready, more Clubhouse capacity throughout our City, and more engagement with high-need populations, we will provide these New Yorkers with the support they need.

Each new program and expansion builds on our guiding principles: Acting early. Centering equity. Supporting New Yorkers in crisis. And maintaining their connections to care. It all adds up to a healthier, happier, and more equitable New York City.

CHAPTER 1: OUR STUDENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE.

Giving Our Children the Skills & Support They Need to Grow Into Happy, Healthy Adults.



Over the past five years, we have led a sea change in the way our children are educated. In our classrooms and our communities, we are teaching young people to care for themselves and their mental health with the same importance we teach Math or Science. We are identifying those experiencing challenges at an early age, and providing comprehensive support with clinicians and specialists trained and ready to help. And we are educating all of our children to process their emotions constructively, cope with difficult situations, and maintain healthy relationships. We are reaching the whole child.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, so many young people in our City have dealt with loss, disruptions, and changes in education such as virtual learning. They have spent long stretches away from friends and family, have seen their routine disrupted, and may have experienced difficult situations at home. We are fortunate to have the foundation of the past five years in place. But now is the moment to double down on our efforts – and go even further to give every child in New York City the support and care they need.

FOR ALL CHILDREN ...

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) & Restorative Justice

Department of Education

In June 2019, the City launched Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Restorative Justice practices for all New York City public school students. SEL programming prioritizes teaching young people communication skills, empathy, and problem solving, and has been proven to improve students' academic performance. Restorative Justice builds on the SEL continuum by training students to practice their SEL skills in everyday life, inside and outside the classroom.

In the East Flatbush neighborhood of Brooklyn, the sixth graders of Meyer Levin Junior High have a routine. Each day, every student gathers for a town hall meeting. They cheer on each other's successes, and support one another through struggles. And when one student bravely opened up about a family member's custody hearing, there were no jeers or taunts from her classmates. There was only empathy and encouragement — letting each young person know, we're in this together.

Social, Emotional, and Academic Behavioral Screenings

Department of Education

Beginning in the communities hardest hit by COVID-19, the Department of Education will make social-emotional and academic behavioral screenings available for all students in grades K-12, hire 150 additional social workers, and add a community school in each of the neighborhoods. The first phase of the plan serves approximately 380,000 students across 830 schools, and includes partnerships with community-based organizations. The result of the screenings

will be analyzed by a school-based team to address the needs of students who need additional care and will guide school-wide programming.

NEW: The City will now make these screenings universal, expanding to all public school students from 3K-12 in the coming school year and providing every school access to a social worker, mental health clinic or CBO-provided mental health services.

NEW: Additional Summer School Support

Department of Education

As many of our young people continue their education over the summer, we will ensure every summer school site has access to mental health resources and support, serving 150,000-190,000 summer school students. This will allow schools to address each student's mental health needs through individual and/or group counseling – making sure each young person receives the help and support they need as they prepare for in-person learning this fall.

NEW: Additional Support For Parents

Department of Education, Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health

- Parent University:** Parents will receive resources to help them understand if their child may need social-emotional and mental health support and how families can help. Resources will be translated to reach all communities, and will include general information about stress and trauma and recorded training sessions.

- NYC Well Partnership:** In addition to school-based options, parents will have specific support through the NYC Well helpline:

- All NYC Well counselors will be trained to understand the school screener
- If a parent would like additional support beyond what is provided in their child's school, an NYC Well Counselor will provide community options

School Response Clinicians

*Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health,
Department of Education*

School Response Clinicians are licensed social workers who provide care for our students in times of immediate emotional distress, including onsite clinical counseling and connecting students to long-term care if necessary. This reduces the practice of school staff calling 911, lessens trips to emergency departments, and provides students the immediate help they need.

NEW: Additional On-Site Mental Health Support

The City will add 350 social workers by Fall 2021 to ensure all schools have access to on-site mental health support, bringing the total commitment to 500 new social workers in our schools Citywide. In addition to school-based social workers, the Department of Education will add a group of 60 borough-based social workers to be deployed at schools across the City as additional support is needed. We will also hire 90 School Psychologists and 30 family support workers over the next 2 years, serving 270 of the most underserved public schools.

FOR CHILDREN IN HIGH-NEED COMMUNITIES ...

School Mental Health Specialists

*Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health,
Department of Education, Department of Health
and Mental Hygiene, Taskforce on Racial Inclusion & Equity*

The City has added new mental health services to hundreds of schools in the neighborhoods most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The School Mental Health Specialist Program includes mental health workers who provide direct service to students through trauma-informed group work at 350 schools in the neighborhoods hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Each Mental Health Specialist serves up to five schools. In addition to their work with students, they provide mental health education to caregivers and school staff to help them address students' mental health needs and strengthen community and family ties.

"I first met with Miguel during his freshman year of high school, after he had been referred to our clinic by his high school social worker. He was suffering from the recent loss of his grandfather, experiencing anxiety, depression, and self-harm, and had symptoms of trauma stemming from years of physical and emotional abuse. It took weeks of extra support until he trusted the process and began to open up. I met with his teachers and school social worker on a regular basis:

Finding ways to provide more support in the classroom, identifying his warning signs, and offering helpful coping strategies during the year. Slowly but surely, Miguel turned a corner. His attendance improved. His grades went up dramatically. He became comfortable asking for help when he needed it. Four years later, Miguel has built deeper relationships with and has transformed his life. I couldn't have been more proud when he accepted an offer to attend college."

— New York City School mental health provider

Mental Health Services in High-Need Schools

***Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health,
Department of Education, Department of Health
and Mental Hygiene***

Nearly 270,000 school-age children in our City — ages 5 to 17 — have a diagnosable mental health condition. Almost half of these children have symptoms that are severe enough to affect day-to-day functioning. Currently, 248 high-need schools across the five boroughs have access to mental health services. Trusted community-based organizations – like Henry Street Settlement, Astor Services, and Counseling in Schools – provide services and training to students, families, teachers and staff to support a healthy school community. As more schools in the communities hardest hit by COVID-19 become community schools, they will receive more access to mental health services as well.

Pathways To Care

***Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health,
Department of Education, NYC Health + Hospitals, Taskforce on Racial Inclusion & Equity***

To support students in the neighborhoods most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the City has launched a new partnership between NYC Health +

Hospitals and the Department of Education. Currently in 44 public schools, “Pathways to Care” expedites referrals from schools to connect students to care at NYC H&H child and adolescent outpatient mental health clinics, where students can receive psychiatric evaluation, therapy, medication management, and other clinical services. We will be reaching more schools in the coming months.

FOR YOUNG CHILDREN ...

Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) Network

***Department of Health & Mental Hygiene,
Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health***

The Early Childhood Mental Health Network provides mental health support for young children and their families, helping to address challenges early. Mental health professionals consult with early childhood programs partnered with the Department of Education (DOE) to address program, classroom, and child-level challenges in order to strengthen the capacity of teachers and caregivers to support children.

Seven early childhood therapeutic centers, open to all New York residents, located throughout the city offer specialized mental health treatment for children from





birth to age five and their families, as well as access to family peer advocates and connection to ongoing support. Additionally, mental health professionals are able to receive specialized training in evidence-based practices and early childhood development through the Early Childhood Mental Health Training and Technical Assistance Center in order to increase the capacity and competencies of professionals working to identify and address the mental health needs of young children.

Over 6,400 children have received therapeutic services since 2016.

NEW: Trauma-Informed Care Classrooms in Early Education

We will also bring more early education support into our classrooms, training our early childhood workforce in trauma-informed practices — including all staff working directly with teachers, leaders, and families. We will train between 25,000-30,000 leaders, teachers, and support staff by September 2021, and will restore the ParentCorps program that provides direct support to families on creating routines and managing stress.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT ...

Healthy Relationship Training for Teens

Outside of the classroom, the City continues to meet teens who need support where they are — high schools, foster care, runaway and homeless youth drop-in centers and crisis shelters — and provides hundreds of healthy relationship training workshops, facilitated by trained peer educators, to help our young people better communicate and interact with peers, classmates, and family members.

Runaway And Homeless Youth

*Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health,
Department for Youth & Community Development*

All City-funded residences and drop-in centers that serve runaway and homeless youth have onsite mental health services. Since launching in 2015, the program has provided mental health services for over 15,600 runaway and homeless youth. In the most recent reporting period, 75 percent of youth felt the program supported their mental well-being.

CHAPTER 2: OUR COMMUNITIES OF COLOR.

Bringing Mental Health Resources to Communities Most in Need.

To be a person of color in our City too often means living a parallel existence with white New Yorkers. The differences are felt in every neighborhood — in the lack of access to healthy food and transportation; the lack of services like Broadband that make daily life more difficult; the lack of good jobs available. All of these inequities manifest themselves in mental health.

Mental health needs and access to care are not equitably experienced. Black, Latinx, and Asian Pacific Islander New Yorkers, for example, have higher rates of mental health needs than White New Yorkers — yet they are less likely to receive treatment. The highest poverty neighborhoods have over twice as many psychiatric hospitalizations per capita as the wealthiest neighborhoods in New York City.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated longstanding and dangerous health disparities, making it all the more urgent that we bring mental health support to communities that have been underserved for so long. We have already taken significant strides, placing more than 70 percent of ThriveNYC programs in federally-designated mental healthcare shortage areas. And in partnership with our City's Taskforce on Racial Inclusion & Equity, we are now poised to go even further to support the communities hit hardest by the pandemic.

RECENTLY OPENED: COVID-19 Centers of Excellence

NYC Health + Hospitals, Taskforce on Racial Inclusion & Equity

First, we must help communities of color recover from the COVID-19 pandemic — especially the neighborhoods hardest hit by this virus. In late 2020 and early 2021, NYC Health + Hospitals expanded its Centers of Excellence by opening COVID-19 Centers of Excellence in the Bronx and Queens, with an additional Center to open in Bushwick. Each Center offers

comprehensive care to those still struggling — ongoing physical and mental health support both in the short-term and long-term as New Yorkers recover from the toll of this virus.

RECENTLY ANNOUNCED: Communities Thrive

Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health, NYC Health + Hospitals

Through Communities Thrive, organizations representing Asian American and Pacific Islander, Black, and Latinx New Yorkers will develop community-driven strategies to promote mental health and will directly connect people who need care to tele-mental health services at NYC Health + Hospitals. With an emphasis on reaching New Yorkers in the neighborhoods hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, Communities Thrive will add mental health support to organizations New Yorkers already rely on for other needs. Studies show that locating mental health support in culturally responsive, community-based organizations and health care providers can mitigate barriers to care. By integrating tele-mental health into primary care practices and community-based organizations already serving Asian American and Pacific Islander, Black, and Latinx New Yorkers, Communities Thrive will offer trusted organizations new resources to address the mental health needs of their clients.

Connections To Care (C2C)

Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health, Department of Health & Mental Hygiene, Mayor's Fund To Advance New York City

Connections to Care (C2C) integrates mental health support into the work of community-based organizations serving at-risk and low-income communities across the City. Through C2C, these organizations

work with mental health providers who train and coach staff to screen their clients for mental health needs, offer direct support when appropriate, and link to local health providers for further care if needed. According to an independent evaluation of C2C conducted by RAND, in a survey of CBO staff who were trained in C2C mental health skills (including mental health screening, Mental Health First Aid, motivational interviewing and other skills), 77% reported that these skills have improved their ability to help clients with behavioral health needs.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, C2C providers continued to operate both onsite where necessary as well as remotely, conducting mental health screening and referrals by phone. Providers developed new ways to support clients during the pandemic, including creating virtual support groups on relevant topics such as anxiety, grief, and loss and delivering social work services outdoors, in parks.

NEW: The C2C model will be integrated into CBOs serving those in the neighborhoods hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, in partnership with the Department of Health & Mental Hygiene and the Taskforce on Racial Inclusion and Equity.

NYC Health + Hospitals has provided over 200,000 tele-behavioral health services since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

NEW: Community Behavioral Health Academy

Mayor's Office of Economic Opportunity, Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health, Taskforce on Racial Inclusion & Equity

One of the long-term challenges we face is a critical shortage of clinical behavioral health providers in underserved communities. Beyond mental health professionals, we can expand the number of people and organizations that can offer behavioral health support to New Yorkers — yet there is not currently a reliable, centralized academy that provides this training at scale.

"Valeria went in for a routine physical at Metropolitan Hospital. During the depression screening that is part of all standard health assessments at behavioral health and primary care NYC Health + Hospital sites, Valeria began talking to her doctor about the crushing stress she was under, eventually revealing that she cried every day. The doctor introduced her to Karen Noyes, a social worker and member of the Mental Health Service Corps. Karen immediately began working with Valeria to build trust. Valeria was being harassed by her ex-husband — yet was worried about involving the police due to her undocumented immigration status, so Karen connected her with an on-site legal services clinic. When Valeria showed some risk for suicidal thoughts, Karen worked with her to develop a safety plan. Using supportive counseling and several different therapeutic interventions, Karen also helped Valeria decide to reveal her struggles to her children, a major milestone in her recovery.

Today, Valeria has seen a dramatic reduction in her symptoms. She told Karen that she has a full system of support around her: "I no longer cry every day. Someone calls me every night. I know they care, and I feel so much better knowing there are people who are helping me."

The City will create a Community Behavioral Health Academy to meet the training needs of government and nonprofit agencies. In partnership with the CUNY School of Professional Studies, we will train a broad range of City agency staff and social service providers with the skills and resources necessary to interact with the public, and provide support & referrals when necessary, with a goal of training more than 5,000 staff over the next three years.

Mental Health Service Corps

Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health, NYC Health + Hospitals

The Mental Health Service Corps (MHSC) is an innovative program that provides three years of high-quality training to early-career behavioral health clinicians. Sixty Corps members deliver services at NYC Health + Hospitals facilities across the five boroughs, reaching thousands of high-need New Yorkers who might otherwise go without behavioral healthcare. About 30 percent of the total population of New York City lives in federally designated mental health professional shortage areas. Seventy-six percent of Mental Health Service Corps placements are located in these shortage areas.

Newborn Home Visiting

***Department of Health and Mental Hygiene,
Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health***

Over 5,000 mothers have been visited through this program to support the families of newborns in the first few weeks after birth. These visits are to families living in the community as well as families living in shelters. The visits from a public health professional provide educational information and materials on a range of topics, including child development, secure attachment and bonding, safe sleep practices and breastfeeding. Mothers can also be screened for depression and families connected to community resources.

NEW: The City has also enhanced its model to extend encounters with families to provide more comprehensive resources which include mental health screenings for anxiety and depression, as well as other health education and referrals to care. The program builds on investments in social emotional learning to build resilience and coping skills in children and families.

COVID-19 Community Conversations ("3C's")

***Department of Health & Mental Hygiene,
Taskforce on Racial Inclusion & Equity***

During the COVID-19 crisis, New Yorkers so often turned to faith leaders to cope with the pain of loss and

Dr. Pierre Arty's Lower East Side church was open to hosting COVID-19 Community Conversation, after having a previous experience holding a Mental Health First Aid training. Over Zoom, the presenter gave helpful statistics and spoke directly to the social, health and emotional concerns facing the communities that the church serves. Afterward, participants told Dr. Arty that they had changed their daily routines with facts and tips given during the Conversation. "Folks that participated thought it was encouraging, educational and a way of demystifying ways to deal with COVID," he said.

challenges of isolation. We partnered with individuals, community organizations, houses of worship and other key places in communities hit hardest by the pandemic to reach New Yorkers and provide them with mental health tips, guidance, and an open line of support.

Support for Faith Leaders

Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health

Mental health is a deeply personal issue, and when people are ready to seek help, so often they turn to the people they are closest to — which can often mean a faith leader. Since the inception of ThriveNYC, we've put a particular emphasis on partnering with faith leaders across the city, especially in communities that have been underserved with mental health support.

The annual Weekend of Faith, which began in 2016, brings together faith leaders of all denominations and backgrounds, and equips them with the resources, knowledge, and support they need to support their congregants and communities. ThriveNYC also offers resources and webinars to help faith leaders promote mental health during COVID-19 and address the effects of trauma on individuals and communities.

Support for LGBTQ Youth

NYC Unity Project

For so many in the LGBTQ community, particularly LGBTQ communities of color, New York City is the first place they've truly felt at home. Yet even with the progress we've made, there is so much more to do to protect LGBTQ youth in our City. Half report feeling sad or hopeless over extended periods of time. They are more likely to be rejected by their families and forced into homelessness. They are more likely to spend their school days hiding from bullying behavior, instead of learning in peace. Tragically, LGBTQ young people are more than three times more likely to attempt suicide than non-LGBTQ youth.

The NYC Unity Project is our first-ever citywide initiative focused on developing innovative policies and programs for LGBTQ youth across New York

City. NYC Unity Works, the Project's most recently launched program, is the nation's largest and most comprehensive publicly funded LGBTQ youth workforce program in the nation. Other recent commitments include expansion of 24-hour homeless youth drop-in centers to every borough and funding to new shelter beds; building permanent supportive housing units for LGBTQ homeless youth; training hundreds of health providers across our public hospital system in LGBTQ-affirming health practices; supporting peer-support groups to tackle youth substance misuse; expanding borough-based sexual health clinics; a comprehensive LGBTQ COVID-19 resource guide; and the creation of LGBTQI-affirming mental health training programs to address family rejection, which is the leading cause of LGBTQI youth homelessness.





CHAPTER 3: NEW YORKERS WHO WANT OR NEED HELP FOR SUBSTANCE MISUSE.

Addressing Substance Use Disorders Like Chronic Illnesses - and Building Healthy Communities.

Our society continues to stigmatize and criminalize those with substance use disorders. In New York City, where the opioid epidemic has devastated communities from Staten Island to the Bronx, our approach is to provide appropriate care for New Yorkers with these disorders. We treat them as chronic illnesses rather than as crimes. In some cases, the substance use disorder stems from underlying trauma or mental illness and continued misuse compromises both physical and mental health. We will save lives and build healthy communities only through access to life-saving interventions, evidence-based treatment and education to both raise awareness of risks and decrease stigma around these disorders.

HealingNYC

The groundbreaking efforts of HealingNYC have laid the foundation for our work — focusing on preventing overdose deaths, preventing opioid misuse and use disorder, and providing access to effective treatment. Key components include:

- Distributing hundreds of thousands of naloxone kits annually citywide
- Connecting high-risk communities with targeted prevention messages and care
- Educating clinicians to reduce overprescribing opioid painkillers
- Expanding crisis intervention services for nonfatal overdoses
- Increasing access to medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD) for tens of thousands of New Yorkers

We have built upon this work, through initiatives like the 2018 Bronx Action Plan, focusing on our

hardest-hit neighborhoods, engaging in community organizing, working with faith-based groups, increasing points of care, and expanding outreach efforts to engage New Yorkers.

Now is the moment to apply the lessons we've learned and go even further.

Health + Hospitals System of Excellence

As part of HealingNYC, our City's Health + Hospitals system has transformed its substance use care model to become a system of excellence in addressing harmful opioid use through the following strategies:

- **Educating health care professionals in primary care and emergency departments** on prescribing smaller doses of opioids and benzodiazepines for shorter lengths of time.
- **Developing metrics and tracking prescribing patterns regarding dosage and supply** through a system-wide NYC Health + Hospitals opioid use and treatment dashboard, in order to ensure accountability and oversight and to avoid harmful consequences.
- **Tripling the number of prescribers** in ambulatory care and emergency departments who are certified to treat patients in buprenorphine induction and maintenance.
- **Registering all hospitals and Federally Qualified Health Centers** (community-based organizations that provide comprehensive primary and preventive care regardless of ability to pay) to establish routine naloxone prescribing and dispensing processes based on best practices.

Peer Corps

*Department of Health & Mental Hygiene, NYC
Service, Department of Homeless Services*

Peer Corps places early career peers in shelters to engage and educate guests on overdose prevention, dispense naloxone, and connect guests to needed services.

NEW: Substance Use Harm Reduction and Treatment

*Department of Health & Mental Hygiene, NYC
Health + Hospitals, Department of Homeless Services*

The City will promote the health of people who use drugs through a 3-step strategy that offers new services and support.

Strategy 1: Raising Awareness

- Raising awareness of fentanyl and increased risk of overdose (OD) among high-risk groups and citywide:** We are increasing outreach by trained community members to older, Black, male New Yorkers who use cocaine and may not be aware of the risk of contamination with fentanyl. DOHMH will launch a multi-part campaign to raise awareness of the presence of fentanyl in the drug supply and the associated increased risk of fatal overdose, particularly among people who use crack/cocaine, methamphetamine, and pills purchased from non-medical sources. Although the reach of this campaign is citywide, particularly through the direct mailing campaign, people living in zip codes with highest overdose deaths will be exposed to campaign images and video through geo-targeted placement.

Strategy 2: Reducing Harm

- Increasing distribution of fentanyl test strips to people who are at particularly high risk of fatal overdose:** DOHMH will purchase fentanyl test strips for distribution to people who use crack/cocaine, methamphetamine, pills purchased through non-medical sources, and other substances which have been confirmed through NYPD lab testing to contain fentanyl. Test strips would be distributed through syringe service programs (SSPs), DOHMH outreach, and other venues.

- Distributing naloxone in a more targeted and flexible way:** The City will fund community-based organizations to distribute naloxone in high-need areas and establish harm reduction vending machines to make naloxone readily available.

- Supporting the launch of Overdose Prevention Centers (OPCs) in NYC through public renewal of City leadership's commitment to bringing OPCs to NYC.** We will continue to call for New York State to approve the pilot project of OPCs, advocate at the federal level to authorize OPCs, and engage stakeholders to prepare for implementation.

- Increasing safe syringe disposal options for – and outreach and service provision – to people who use drugs (PWUD) in areas highly impacted by syringe litter and overdose:** The City will fund two new Outreach and Safety Teams in Harlem managed by local syringe service programs (SSPs) as well as the installation of syringe disposal kiosks in areas across the city with a high volume of syringe litter. The City will also fund extended hours on nights and weekends for drop-in services, outreach, and syringe litter pick-up by SSPs in the South Bronx, Washington Heights, Harlem and Midtown. Expanded drop-in hours provide an alternative space for PWUD to spend time, reduce public injection and risky injection practices associated with overdose, and enhance the impact of nights and weekend outreach by offering a place for respite and services. In addition to funding night and weekend outreach by six SSP Outreach and Safety Teams, this initiative further enhances daytime outreach in Harlem and the South Bronx, and establishes a new harm reduction outreach team in the North Bronx. Overall, these activities will increase accessibility and connection to services and decrease COVID-related isolation, particularly for people who are experiencing street homelessness and use drugs.

Strategy 3: Expanding Treatment

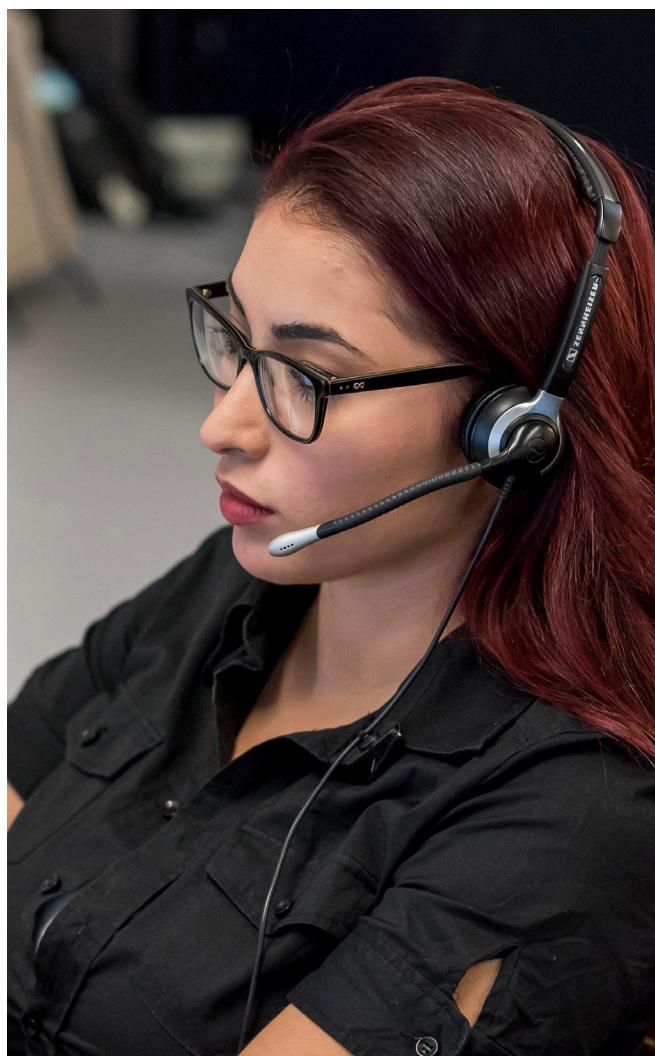
- Expanding buprenorphine outreach for homeless populations (EBOHP) with same-day access in multiple low-barrier settings:** The City will fund increased street outreach, engagement, and referrals for same-day buprenorphine treatment for people

experiencing homelessness in three low-threshold settings: on the street through community-based organizations (CBOs), in and around SSPs drop-in centers, and in homeless shelters. CBOs already working with unstably housed populations will be equipped to incorporate buprenorphine access into their outreach work through telemedicine. Similarly, the City will also fund same-day buprenorphine navigation in two SSP drop-in centers where staff will engage and screen patients for buprenorphine treatment, and connect them through telemedicine to a buprenorphine prescriber to start buprenorphine and then be connected with a clinic provider for follow-up.

- **Enhancing NYC Health + Hospitals' Emergency Department Leads program**, currently focused on substance use disorder intervention and referral, to provide 24/7 coverage and include patients with serious mental illness as well, reaching up to 81,000 patients.
- **Expanding NYC Health + Hospitals' existing virtual Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) access into a system-wide Addiction Single Point of Access program.** This will provide virtual and in-person appointments to patients, referrals to ongoing care, and around-the-clock consultation to emergency departments.
- **Launching NYC Health + Hospitals' mobile medical treatment clinic from Lincoln Hospital. Focused on substance use and harm reduction,** this program will provide MAT and care across the South Bronx and East Harlem.
- **Expanding Consult for Addiction Treatment and Care in Hospitals (CATCH) Teams.** CATCH teams are multi-disciplinary consisting of prescribers, social workers, and peers. CATCH teams provide consultation on hospitalized patients with SUDs and assist with navigation to ongoing care post-discharge. Currently living in six of the system's hospitals, the expansion would place additional teams at Jacobi, Kings, NCB, and Queens hospitals.

NEW: Expanded Funding for 15 Syringe Service Programs

Since the launch of HealingNYC, the City has quadrupled the funding for programs that use harm reduction, an approach tailored to people who are actively using drugs, but not ready to engage in treatment or who need additional support beyond that offered by traditional treatment. Harm reduction helps to prevent problems including acute and chronic infections, as well as overdose. The 15 syringe service programs across the city provide critical services to people who use drugs, including sterile drug use supplies, overdose prevention education and harm reduction counseling. These programs have increased the numbers of people they serve during the overdose crisis.





CHAPTER 4: NEW YORKERS WITH SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS (SMI).

Supporting New Yorkers With Serious Mental Illness.



Around 280,000 New Yorkers have serious mental illness (SMI). Too many are not connected to the care they need. For many, the best support is community-based, from those who understand their challenges, provide them with meaningful interactions, and can come to them — reaching them with support right where they need it. The City is taking additional steps to help those with SMI maintain their connection to care.

Clubhouses for New Yorkers with Serious Mental Illness

*Department of Health and Mental Hygiene,
Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health*

Clubhouses are evidence-based models of psychiatric rehabilitation — one-stop places that help people with SMI in their recovery by providing peer support, access to services, employment and educational opportu-

nities, socialization and recreation in a safe, restorative and structured setting. Research shows that the Clubhouse model reduces hospitalization and justice involvement and improves health and wellness. The City's 16 Clubhouses currently have the capacity to serve 3,000 members.

NEW: Adding Clubhouse capacity to reach more New Yorkers in need.

The City will grow our Clubhouse capacity, adding staff and other resources to existing Clubhouses. We will also invest in engagement strategies to spread the word, and reach those experiencing homelessness and other populations needing a higher level of support. Clubhouse members and staff will conduct outreach and enrollment activities citywide at sites which serve these populations such as soup kitchens, pantries, shelters, justice related settings and hospitals and

geographic areas and settings where they may reside such as Times Square, parks, train and subway stations

Mobile Treatment for New Yorkers with Serious Mental Illness (SMI)

*Department of Health and Mental Hygiene,
Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health*

Many New Yorkers with serious mental illness have been poorly served by traditional forms of care for a number of reasons - including high levels of homelessness, substance use disorders, and involvement with the legal system. Sometimes, those who can access treatment have trouble staying connected to it over time, making their illness more difficult to manage. That's why the City has expanded support for mobile treatment teams of health professionals - including peers, nurses, social workers, and psychiatrists - that bring clinical services directly to New Yorkers, wherever and whenever they need it. First established in 2016, Intensive Mobile Treatment teams have made a difference in the lives of enrolled individuals – 90% of Intensive Mobile Treatment clients have continued to receive services for a year or more, and 47% of clients who were unhoused, many experiencing street homelessness, have moved into housing.

NEW: The City is adding 25 new Intensive Mobile Treatment teams to serve 675 more people, eliminating a long waitlist.

NEW: We are also launching the CONNECT (Continuous Engagement between Community and Clinic Treatment) demonstration project to provide integrated mobile and brick-and-mortar treatment for up to 850 clients with serious mental illness. Through this innovative and flexible model of care, clients will be able to engage in intense mental health and substance use treatment and services that aim to address social determinants of health.

After losing his job, Victor started drinking more, and taking Xanax. His behavior became increasingly erratic - he made threats of aggression and suicide, and got into a physical altercation that left him with a head injury. Worried about her son, Victor's mother called NYC Well. Because of the potential for violence, she was connected to a Co-Response Team of one behavioral health professional and two police officers who came to their home. With the team's support, Victor enrolled in therapy and started attending AA meetings. They also referred him to a job training and placement agency so he could find stable employment. Within months, Victor felt hopeful for the future again.

Co-Response Teams

*Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health,
NYPD, Department of Health and Mental
Hygiene*

Co-Response Teams (CRT) of two police officers and one behavioral health professional work 16 hours per day, 7 days per week, to serve community members presenting with mental health or substance use challenges who are at an elevated risk of harm to themselves or others. The teams offer short-term engagement to facilitate connections to care and linkages to support services. Co-Response Teams have served 1,925 New Yorkers since 2016. In the most recent reporting period, New Yorkers who had previous violent offenses saw a 91% reduction in police contacts involving violent offenses three months after engagement with a Co-Response Team.



CHAPTER 5: EVERY NEW YORKER WHO NEEDS HELP.

More Support Where You Are.



The past year has taken a toll on every New Yorker. Too many have experienced loss – the loss of a daily routine, the loss of a steady job, or most painfully, the loss of a loved one. We have been deprived of the connections that are essential to our lives, and isolated from friends and family.

For any New Yorker who needs help – or just believes they may need help – we will be there. We are going into our communities to provide support in ways we never have before. We are doubling down on expanding access to care across the City. And we will continue to provide specialized care for groups we know have unique challenges, including veterans, aging New Yorkers, and survivors of a crime, violence, or abuse.

NEW: Mental Health Resources at Vaccination Sites

*Department of Health & Mental Hygiene,
NYC Health + Hospitals*

Since late 2020, the City of New York has stood up a massive vaccination effort citywide to help win the war against COVID-19 — which, as of this report, has put almost 6 million doses into the arms of New Yorkers. With millions of people receiving the physical protection they need, and a strong vaccination effort now up and running, the City can now take the next step at our sites — and use this critical moment to provide more mental health support to New Yorkers.

At all City-operated vaccination sites, we will provide on-site resources that highlight specific programs including NYC Well, Project Hope, and NYC Care where any New Yorker can turn to get help. We will do this through Mental Health Amplifiers at each site – staff members who will reach out to distribute resources, answer questions, and connect people with the help they need.

NYC Well

Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Since launching in 2016, NYC Well has served as the City's gateway to behavioral health services. A comprehensive, free behavioral health helpline, it offers 24/7 support, as well as connection to ongoing mental health and substance use services, in more than 200 languages.

The helpline answered 73 percent more calls, texts, and online chats in November 2020 than in November 2019. According to an independent evaluation completed by Abt Associates in 2020, NYC Well users overwhelmingly report that NYC Well effectively addressed their needs. Nearly 90 percent of surveyed NYC Well users reported that NYC Well helped them deal with their problems and nearly one in five surveyed NYC Well users noted they would not have contacted anyone in the absence of NYC Well.

More than one million New Yorkers have received immediate support from NYC Well counselors and peer specialists, as well as referrals to ongoing care.

Supporting Veterans

Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health, Department of Veterans' Services

New York City's veterans don't only deserve our admiration; they deserve our City's ongoing support. Many of the 210,000 veterans who call our City home return from their service and experience social isolation — a

challenge felt deeply even before COVID-19.

During the pandemic, the City launched Mission: VetCheck, a collaboration with veteran-serving organizations and New York Cares. Together, veterans, family members, National Guard members and other volunteers made over 24,000 supportive check-in calls between April and December of 2020. In addition to offering a caring voice in an isolating time, volunteers provided support and connections to vital public services – like mental health resources, meals, COVID testing sites, and VA benefits. Many veterans were provided helpful information immediately, and more than 1,000 others were referred to DVS for resources and support.

Elisa sat with a detective at the Bronx precinct where she'd first reported her assault. As she spoke with the detective on the case, she became increasingly emotional. As her distress escalated, she told the detective she wanted to harm herself. The detective went straight to the Safe Horizon victim advocate stationed in his precinct as part of the Crime Victim Assistance Program. The advocate was able to determine that Elisa was not actively suicidal and did not require emergency medical care. In talking with her, the advocate realized that Elisa couldn't bear the idea of being left alone when her parents left. The advocate called Elisa's parents, and they spoke together in Spanish about her concerns. Elisa's parents decided to postpone their return home so they could continue to support her and help her feel safe. And, the advocate connected Elisa to counseling services, so she could have support in place when her parents eventually left the city.

Supporting Aging New Yorkers

*Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health,
Department for the Aging*

Caring for older New Yorkers isn't only about physical health. Over the past year, we've all felt the difficulty of being isolated from family and loved ones. That is especially true for our older adults, even before this crisis. In 2017, 85,000 older New Yorkers suffered from depression, but evidence shows that less than 25 percent of older adults with mental illness currently receive treatment from a mental health professional.

Clinicians are now available for members of 45 older adult centers across the five boroughs, where they screen participants for a variety of mental health needs including depression and anxiety, provide on-site therapy and referrals as needed, lead educational programs, facilitate conversations and share information with older adults about anxiety, depression and other mental health topics. In the most recent reporting period, older New Yorkers in treatment in these centers showed a 57% clinically significant improvement in anxiety three months after initiating treatment and a 62% clinically significant improvement in depression three months after initiating treatment.

Supporting Survivors of Crime, Violence, and Abuse

*Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health,
NYPD*

New York City is the only major city in the nation to extend universal support to all people harmed by crime, violence, and abuse — reaching out to them as soon as possible to help them recover from the trauma, understand their options and regain a sense of control over their lives.

Through the Crime Victim Assistance Program, victim advocates provide support in all 77 police precincts and all 9 Police Service Areas across the five boroughs. The program is implemented by Safe Horizon, the nation's leading victim service agency. Before ThriveNYC, victim advocates were available in Police Service Areas and just three precincts citywide. Most victims of crime were left to navigate the complicated landscape

of the mental health, justice, and social service systems on their own. Today, every single victim of crime has access to supportive counseling and other practical resources, right in their neighborhood—whether they report the crime to the police or choose not to. Over 165,000 people have received support or services and 93% of victims report feeling safer physically and/or emotionally after receiving Crime Victim Assistance Program assistance.

Mental Health First Aid Training

*Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health,
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene*

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is an evidence-driven, free, eight-hour training to expand the number of people who can help New Yorkers in need. From 2016 until in-person trainings were suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic, training was regularly provided seven days a week in all five boroughs and over 159,000 New Yorkers completed the training, including over 65,000 New York City government employees. The training was offered in English, Mandarin and Spanish, and helped trainees recognize mental health needs, learn how to talk about them, and learn where to direct people in need to ongoing care. In the latest reporting period, 88% of MHFA trainees reported that they used the knowledge and/or skills learned in the training to help others within the six months following the training.

Health-Centered Responses in Moments of Crisis.

Behavioral health crises are devastating to everyone involved. Too many New Yorkers know the pain of losing a loved one to overdose. Too many know what it feels like to desperately want to help a loved one in a moment of crisis — yet simply don't know who to call, or where to turn. And for people living with serious mental illness but without ongoing care, worry and fear are near-constant companions.

Over the past seven years, we have transformed the way we respond to people in crisis — and the tide is starting to turn. The overall number of mental health 911 calls fell by over 8,000 in 2019 and by an additional 6,000 in 2020 -- the first decline following a decade in which 911 mental health calls increased every year and in every precinct in the city. This decline follows a concerted effort to strengthen how the City prevents and responds to mental health crises, including the introduction of new teams that bring mental health support to people before, during and after crises. And now, with more resources than ever, we will continue to meet each moment of crisis with compassionate support.

Health-Centered Responses to Mental Health Emergencies

Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health, FDNY, NYC Health + Hospitals, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, NYPD

Starting in June 2021, teams of social workers and Emergency Medical Services Technicians (EMTs) or paramedics are responding to mental health 911 calls that do not involve weapons or an imminent risk of violence East and Central Harlem. This represents the first time in New York City that mental health professionals will be part of the response to mental health emergencies, reducing the number of times police will respond to 911 calls in these neighborhoods.

These new Mental Health Response Teams use their physical and mental health expertise, and experience in

crisis response, to de-escalate emergency situations and respond to a range of behavioral health problems, such as suicidal ideation, substance misuse, serious mental illness, and physical health problems, which can mask mental health problems. As the pilot program builds a strong foundation, we will take what we learn to expand to more high-need neighborhoods and eventually, go citywide.

Mobile Crisis Teams

Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health

Not all crises require an emergency response. Some mental health crises require an urgent, but not an immediate response. For that reason, New York City has enhanced our mental health urgent response infrastructure. Mobile Crisis Teams include clinicians and peers who provide in-person assessments and connection to care for people experiencing behavioral health crises. They serve both children and adults in their communities, their schools, and their homes. These teams are deployed about 20,000 times a year by NYC Well, public hospitals and healthcare providers. Through the recommendation of the Crisis Prevention and Response Task Force, Mobile Crisis Teams are now responding to people within a few hours during the day and early evening, every day of the year. And in 2020, we added 10 new Children's Mobile Crisis teams to serve children and young people up to the age of 21.

Mental health emergencies to 911 are declining for the first time in a decade. After nearly doubling between 2008 and 2018, with increases every year and in every precinct, mental health 911 calls declined in 2019, and again in 2020.

HEAT Teams

*Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health,
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene*

Health Engagement Assessment Teams (HEAT) comprise one behavioral health clinician and one peer with lived experience with a mental health challenge. The HEAT teams proactively engage people in the community presenting with a behavioral health challenge or health concern impacting their daily functioning. In 2019, the City added four additional HEAT teams to serve two high-need precincts, in northern Manhattan and the Bronx.

NEW: Beginning this spring, new HEAT teams will provide follow-up care to people who have been involved in frequent 911 mental health emergency calls.

Support and Connection Centers

*Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health,
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene*

New York City's Support and Connection Centers promote community-based and person-centered engagement, stabilization and connection to services. Centers offer short-term clinical and non-clinical services to people with mental health and substance use needs, and give police officers an alternative to avoidable emergency room visits or criminal justice interventions. The first Support and Connection Center in New York City opened in 2020 in East Harlem, and the second will open in the East Bronx in 2021.

Neighborhood Support Networks

*Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health,
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene*

The Neighborhood Support Network (NSN) will provide crisis prevention support to individuals in East and Central Harlem through a network of community- and faith-based organizations and peers. Support will be client-directed and may include crisis counseling, peer support, coordinated social services, treatment services within or outside of formal mental healthcare, support for basic needs (such as food and clothing), recreation, socialization, safe spaces, and more. Created after a recommendation from the NYC Crisis Prevention and Response Taskforce, NSNs aim to reduce future 911 behavioral health calls, unnecessary emergency department care, and/or hospitalization.



Where We Go From Here

For more than seven years, we have been building a foundation to provide every New Yorker with mental health care and support when they need it. For decades, uneven and insufficient federal and state funding for mental health services left hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers without care. ThriveNYC represented the first investment in New York City's history to begin closing these gaps in services, expand where, when and how we deliver mental health support, and work toward a system that reaches all New Yorkers. Initiatives like NYC Well; Social and Emotional Learning; new onsite mental health services in schools, shelters, police precincts and centers for older New Yorkers; and a significant expansion of mobile treatment teams have marked extraordinary steps forward in how we reach our people. And over the past year, as our people have been challenged like never before, we have doubled down on our efforts.

Yet there is still more to do. As we emerge from COVID-19, New Yorkers have many mental health needs and will continue to have them in the years and decade to come. We must continue to push for federal and state funding, and a comprehensive national mental health strategy that would benefit every city and locality. Yet we must also continue to act on our own. We must invest to keep closing gaps to care. And we must acknowledge in the wake of COVID-19 that, if left unaddressed, mental health challenges could be a shadow pandemic that lingers for years.

That is why we created the Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health, which makes our commitment to mental health a permanent fixture in City government. Here are four priority areas where this office will partner with City agencies to build on this foundation:

- **Continuing to address deep-seated inequities.**

Even as we increase access points, grow connections to care, and see fewer mental health emergencies ... vast inequities still exist in communities of color,

where New Yorkers experience the most challenges. We must continue to invest in programs that provide accessible and culturally responsive services to New Yorkers of color. And we must continue to bring mental health services to neighborhoods that have been underserved for too long – in terms of mental health support and across the areas that affect someone's mental health, such as access to transportation, healthy food, clean air, and Broadband.

- **Growing our mental health workforce in a thoughtful way.** We must address a growing shortage of providers who can care for those in need. We must make it attractive and financially sustainable for people to complete professional training in mental healthcare and commit to serving populations with few resources and high mental health needs. We must also acknowledge that not every person dealing with mild anxiety needs a psychiatrist. We can use creative strategies to broaden the universe of those who can provide care.
- **Engaging those who have experience with mental illness.** As we support New Yorkers living with serious mental illness (SMI), we must continue to bring in those who have lived experience – making them central to the conversation, and investing in more peer support from those who directly understand the challenges and needs.
- **Investing in mental health at every stage of a person's life.** Truly addressing this crisis will mean not only meeting people in moments of crisis – but reaching them early, in many cases long before a challenge has become serious. At every stage, mental health support works – for children, teenagers, young adults, parents, the middle-aged, and the elderly.

Conclusion: Mental Health For All

New York City has always been a beacon to the world, drawing talent and energy from every corner of the globe to create an unparalleled richness in culture, commerce, and innovation. And as this report documents, we are also a leader in mental health. We achieved that status program by program, agency by agency, story by story.

After listening to the stories of what New Yorkers needed, we made access to mental health a fundamental right for our people. Now, we will go further: Acting early, to prevent small challenges from becoming bigger ones. Centering equity by bringing additional resources to neighborhoods that have been underserved for generations. Supporting New Yorkers at risk of crisis, and providing long-term stability for those dealing with serious mental illness.

This work is not relegated to one office or one agency. We opened many doors in many places in many ways. We bring mental health support to people harmed by crime, violence or abuse by embedding support in police stations, to aging New Yorkers at community centers, to students who learn conflict resolution along with reading and math. We bring care and support into the homes of parents of newborns and into residences and drop-in centers for runaway and homeless youth. Our mantra is that there is no wrong door to access care.

New York City's programs and approaches can be replicated elsewhere, even as we demand that cities and localities not be solely charged with the challenge of providing mental health care. We must continue to demand a comprehensive federal strategy to guarantee mental health support and services for every American, no matter where they call home. We must build on this foundation in New York City in the coming years – continuing to invest in the health and well-being of our people. And we must embrace the idea that mental health support is a human right: as American as apple pie and as foundational as the pursuit of happiness.

We will meet this historic moment of confronting COVID-19 and rebuilding only by genuinely believing that health also means mental health. We need everyone pulling together, as strong as possible in every way, to move beyond this pandemic and on to a brighter future.