

FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF CANDIDATES FOR ELECTED
OFFICE IN NEW YORK CITY:

PUBLIC HEALTH OPPORTUNITIES



Fund for
Public Health NYC
Health is everybody's business.

Executive Summary

New York City's public health system is crucial to the well-being of individuals, communities, and our city's prosperity. Working to improve the health of New Yorkers is not just a smart investment of time and resources; it is one of the most tangible expressions of our shared value to care for and support each other as citizens who want our city to thrive.

New York has come far in its recovery from being one of the initial epicenters of the COVID-19 pandemic. But that recovery has not been felt equally by all our city's residents. Today, Black New Yorkers are dying more than five years earlier than white New Yorkers. Chronic diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer are the leading causes of death for New Yorkers, with morbidity and mortality strongly correlated with where people live and what access they have to prevention and treatment.

Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, funding for public health in the U.S. did not exceed 4% of the nearly \$5 trillion the U.S. spends annually on healthcare. So far this year, we have seen drastic reductions in federal funding for public health services and infrastructure. Moreover, Medicaid, upon which 50% of New Yorkers rely for essential health and social services, is threatened with the possibility of billions of dollars in funding cuts.

The Fund for Public Health NYC has developed this nonpartisan resource to inform all of the candidates running for office in New York City about the importance of protecting and improving the health of all New Yorkers. While the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene often leads this work, equitably responding to the needs of 8.5 million New Yorkers necessitates broad collaboration between city agencies, community-based organizations, the corporate sector, philanthropy, and our elected officials.

New York City has often successfully responded to challenges through innovative public-private partnerships. Though philanthropy and private capital can never replace the possible loss of billions of dollars in federal funding, New York's elected officials should encourage cross-sector collaborations to help the city respond to challenges with greater agility, innovation, and efficiency.

As a candidate for office in New York City, protecting the health and safety of millions of New Yorkers may soon be in your hands and will be one of your highest priorities. The Fund for Public Health NYC is here as a resource to help inform all candidates about the public health needs of our city and help every New Yorker live their healthiest life.

Sincerely,



Sara W. Gardner, MPH
Chief Executive Officer
Fund for Public Health of New York



What is Public Health?

Public health promotes and protects the health of all people and their communities. It is a science-based, evidence-backed field that strives to give everyone a safe place to live, learn, work, and play.

- American Public Health Association

Improving Public Health Requires:



A focus on prevention and equitable access to quality care for all people.



Robust data collection, analysis, and dissemination.



Health promotion and public education tailored to community needs.



Collaborations between people and the public and private sectors on all levels, from engaging local communities, to city-wide, state, and federal partnerships.



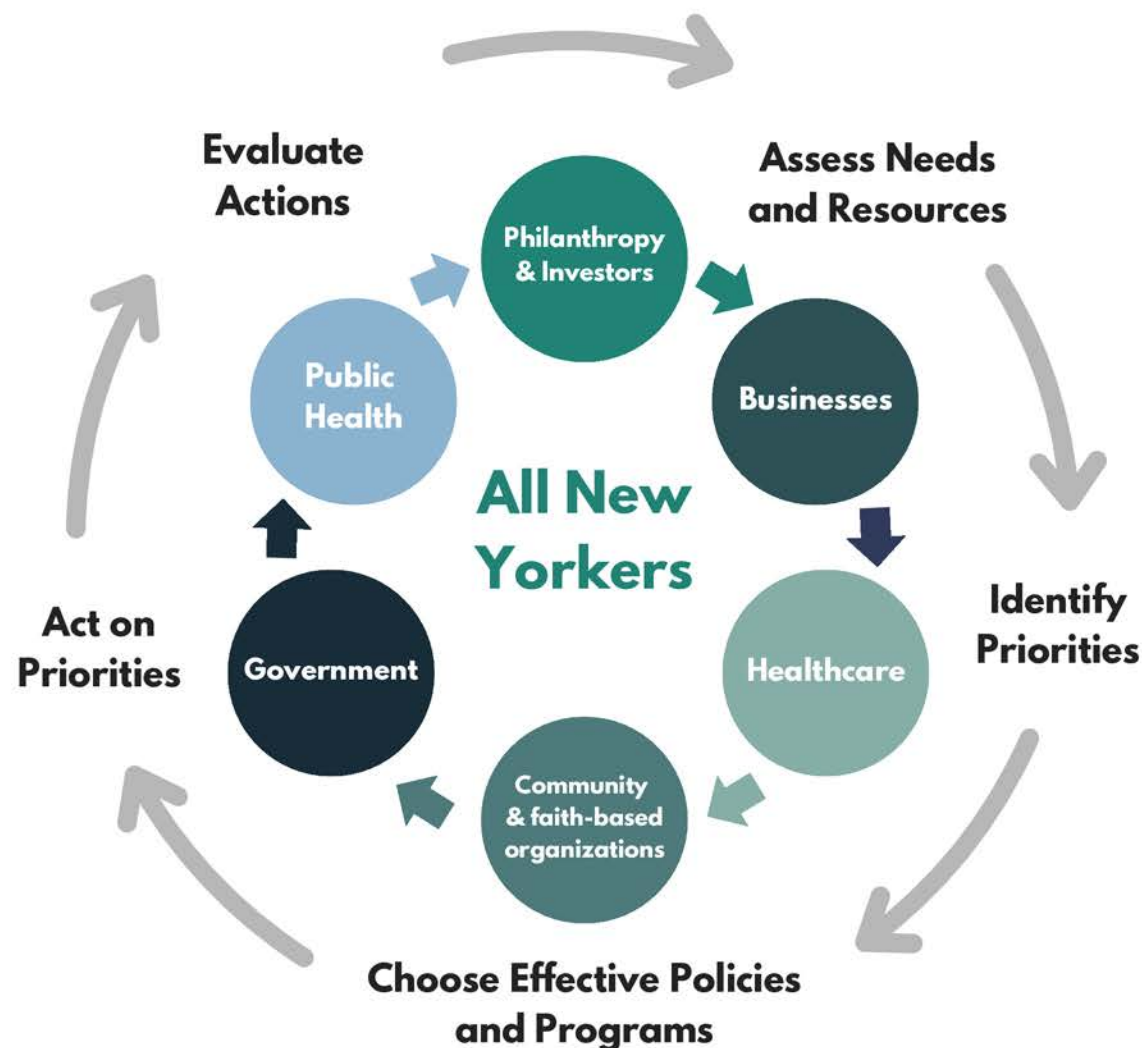
Office Holders Should Support and Invest in Public Health Strategies That Benefit All New Yorkers:



- **Support comprehensive public health initiatives like HealthyNYC** to improve the health and life expectancy of all New Yorkers. HealthyNYC is a population health agenda that aims **to extend the average life expectancy of New Yorkers to 83 years by 2030**, with gains across racial and ethnic groups.
- **Ensure that high-quality preventive health services and treatments are accessible** to all people, helping to safeguard everyone who lives in, works in, or visits NYC. Prevention not only saves lives, it saves the City money.
- **Continue to learn from 9/11, Hurricane Sandy, and the COVID-19 pandemic** to inform response readiness and adequately fund emergency preparedness.
- **Maintain NYC's rigorous health surveillance, data collection, and analysis capabilities.** The health of 8.5 million New Yorkers and our more than 20 million tri-state neighbors relies on NYC's ability to monitor, analyze, and efficiently **disseminate and use essential public health data.**
- **Provide engaging and informative public health information and education built on data, facts, and science.** Develop public education programs and interventions with trusted messengers and partners, including community health workers, **to encourage New Yorkers to improve their health and the health of their communities.**
- **Encourage and build upon multi-sector partnerships** for sustainable public health improvements. Public-private partnerships mobilize diverse resources, including private capital, philanthropic funding, and specialized expertise, **to launch and scale responses to immediate and long-standing public health challenges.**

How Can We Make a Difference? Partnership in Public Health

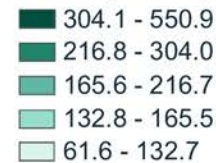
City agencies, health care providers, service organizations, businesses, community and faith-based organizations, and individuals can all contribute to improving the health of New Yorkers!



Unequal Life Expectancy in New York City

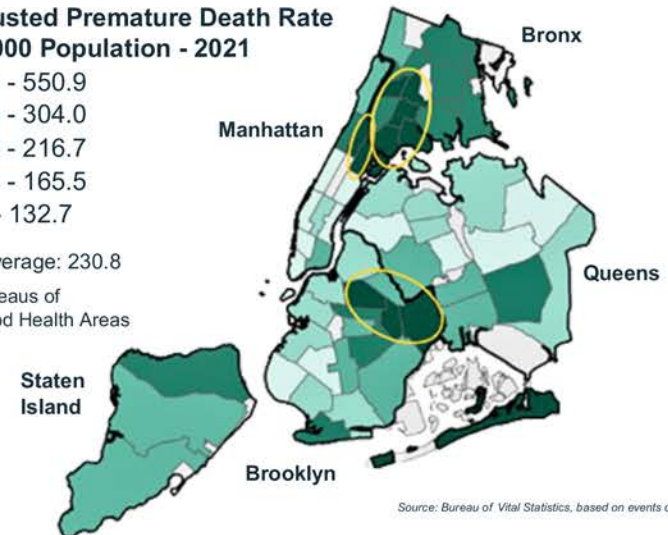
Due to historical racial and economic segregation, people of color are more likely to live in NYC neighborhoods with high poverty rates. Inequities in housing, nutrition, economic opportunity, and access to healthcare compound over time, resulting in poorer health outcomes. As these maps of NYC show, there is a strong correlation between neighborhoods with high poverty and neighborhoods with racial segregation and lower life expectancy.

Age-Adjusted Premature Death Rate
Per 100,000 Population - 2021



Citywide Average: 230.8

Bureaus of
Neighborhood Health Areas



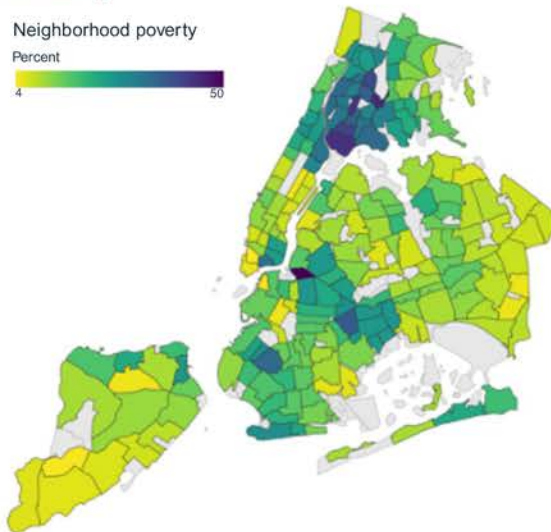
Source: Bureau of Vital Statistics, based on events occurring in 2021

Poverty & Race

Poverty

Neighborhood poverty

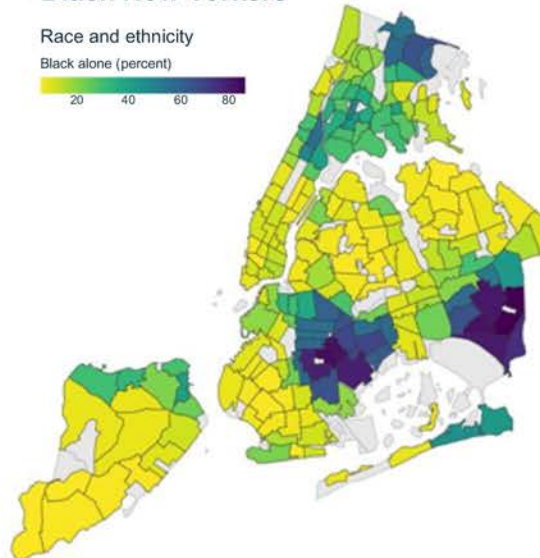
Percent



Black New Yorkers

Race and ethnicity

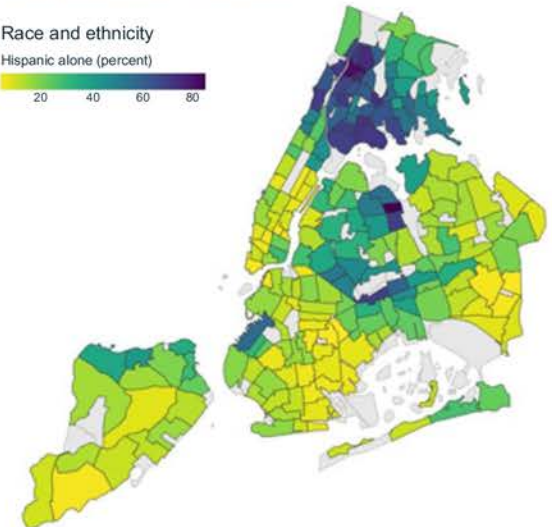
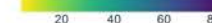
Black alone (percent)



Hispanic New Yorkers

Race and ethnicity

Hispanic alone (percent)



Chronic Disease

CHALLENGE:

Chronic diseases, such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and screenable cancers, are a leading cause of death in NYC, with significant disparities based on race and socioeconomic status.

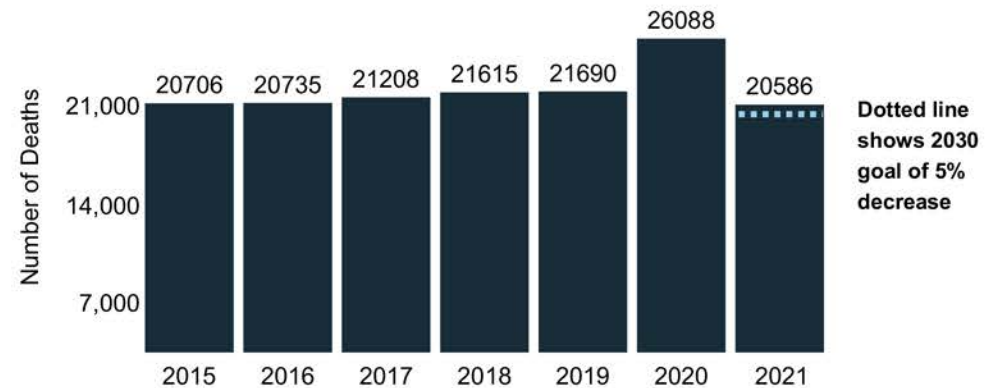


RESPONSE:

Enhance interagency and public-private cooperation to help improve access to food, housing, healthcare, and financial and social supports. Prevent and reduce smoking and alcohol consumption, and address toxins in our food supply. Advance community-led and community-tailored health interventions by building community resources.

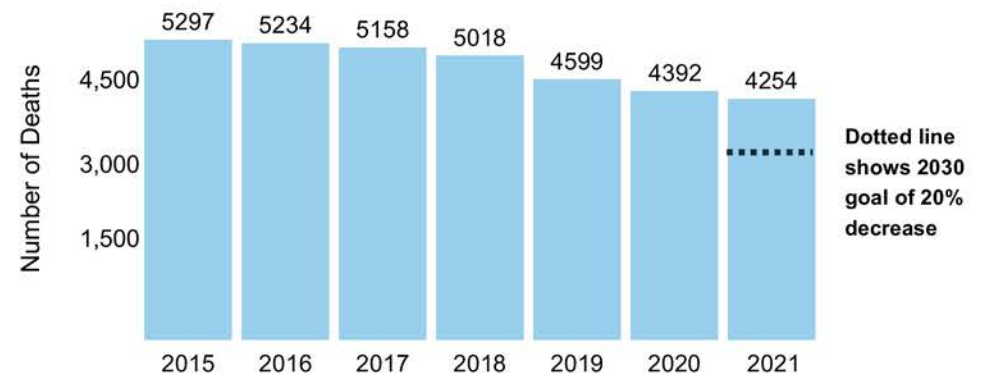
HealthyNYC Goal: Reduce deaths from cardiovascular disease and diabetes by 5% by 2030; screenable cancers by 20%.

Number of Cardiovascular Disease and Diabetes-Related Deaths, 2015 to 2021, with 2030 Goal



Source: Data are provided by the NYC Health Department. 2021 data are provisional. Note: Cardiovascular disease includes heart disease, stroke and high blood pressure. Deaths are due to these conditions as well as to diabetes and kidney disease.

Number of Screenable Cancer Deaths, 2015 to 2021, with 2030 Goal



Source: Data are provided by the NYC Health Department. 2021 data are provisional.

Mental Health & Overdose

CHALLENGE:

The COVID-19 pandemic and continuing social isolation have led to increased overdose and suicide rates.

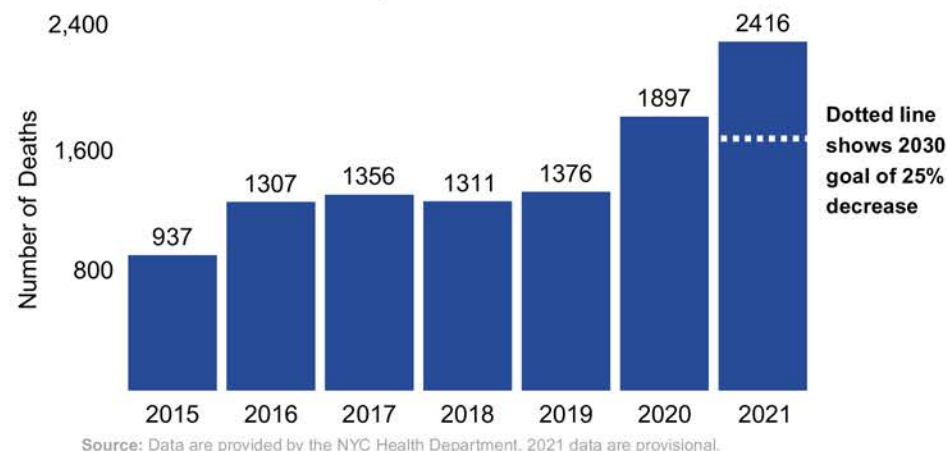


RESPONSE:

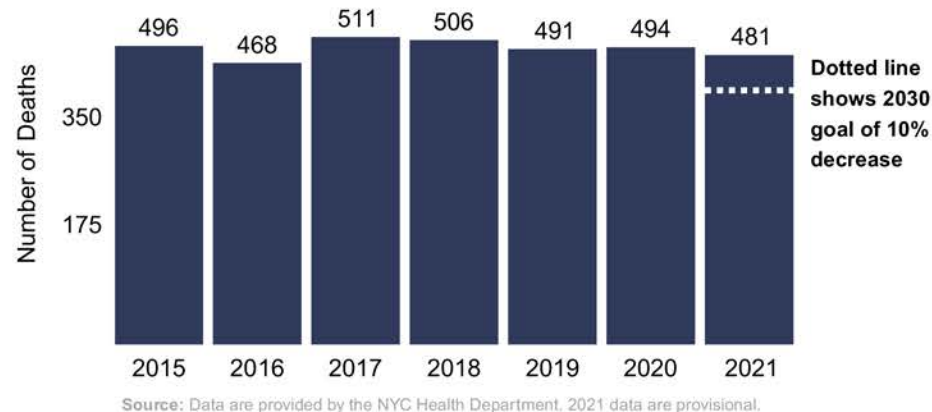
Increase access to naloxone and medication-assisted treatment, including methadone. Expand harm reduction and recovery services, as well as response services to nonfatal overdose. Support drug-checking programs and fentanyl test strip distribution. Increase access to culturally responsive mental and social support services. Address the impact of social media on youth mental health and suicidal ideation.

HealthyNYC Goal: Reduce overdose deaths by 25% by 2030 and reduce suicide deaths by 10% by 2030.

Number of Overdose Deaths, 2015 to 2021, with 2030 Goal



Number of Suicide Deaths, 2015 to 2021, with 2030 Goal



Maternal Mortality & Morbidity

CHALLENGE:

Maternal mortality rates and instances of maternal morbidity in NYC show significant racial disparities, particularly affecting Black women.

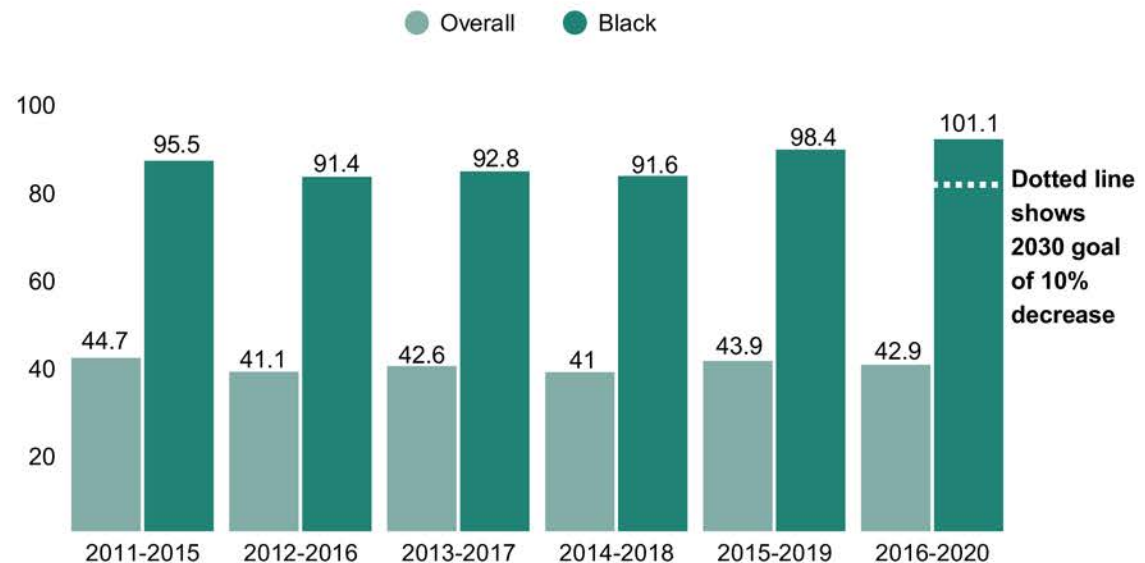
RESPONSE:

Increase access to health care and social support, including behavioral health systems, and increase the quality of sexual and reproductive healthcare. Direct resources to support pregnant and postpartum New Yorkers in their community, including through Neighborhood Stress Free Zones and the Maternal Medical Home model.



HealthyNYC Goal: Reduce maternal mortality rates among Black women by 10% by 2030.

Rate of Maternal Mortality, 2011 to 2020, with 2030 Goal
Deaths per 100,000 live births



Source: Data are provided by the NYC Health Department. Notes: The overall rates include all racial and ethnic groups, including Black, Latino, API, White and other groups. Due to instability in the pregnancy-associated maternal mortality rates from year to year, rates are presented as five-year averages to obtain more reliable ratios.

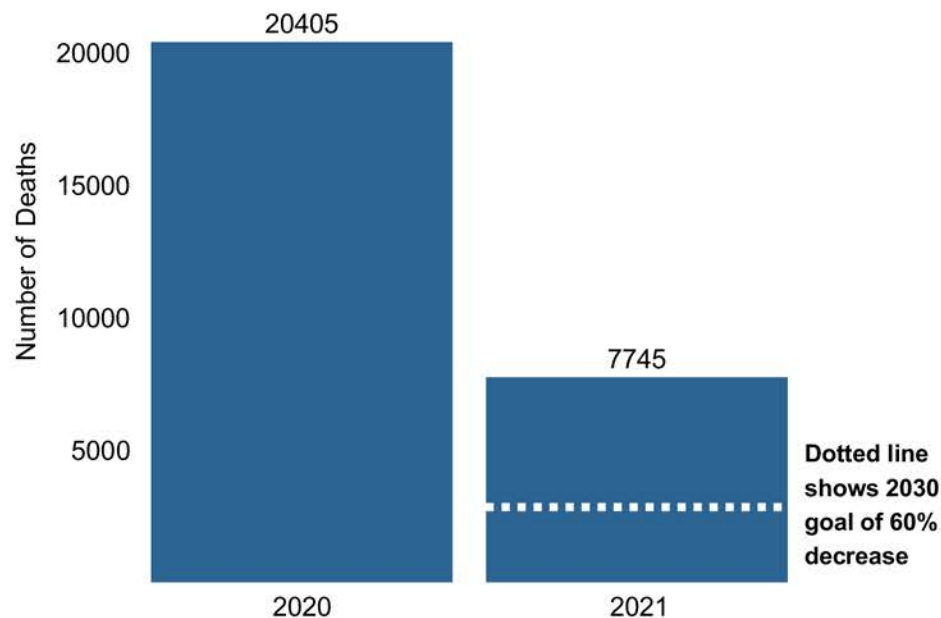
Immunizations & Vaccine Hesitancy

HealthyNYC Goal: Decrease deaths due to COVID-19 by 60% by 2030.

CHALLENGE:

Prevent and reverse falling vaccination rates for communicable and infectious diseases such as measles, COVID-19, HPV, tuberculosis, and Mpox.

Number of COVID-19 Deaths, 2020 to 2021, with 2030 Goal



Source: Data are provided by the NYC Health Department and start from January 2020. 2021 data are provisional.



RESPONSE:

Increase up-to-date vaccine coverage, especially among groups at higher risk for severe outcomes. Create and disseminate tailored communications through healthcare providers, trusted community partners, and public health education campaigns. Strengthen and maintain disease surveillance, testing, and information sharing.

Medicaid & Funding for Public Health

**\$56
billion**

flows through NYC's healthcare system annually to provide crucial Medicaid coverage for:

40%

of all New Yorkers

60%

of NYC children

50%

of NYC births

CHALLENGE:

Funding cuts and/or significant policy changes to Medicaid eligibility requirements will directly impact the health and financial stability of 4 million people in NYC, the majority of whom are children, older adults, and people with disabilities.



RESPONSE:

Advocate in partnership with stakeholders to prevent federal cuts to Medicaid. Medicaid is not only one of the most effective anti-poverty programs for individuals, but it bolsters the economic well-being of NYC through an ecosystem of healthcare providers, community-based organizations, and local businesses. Advocate for NYC's fair share of state public health funding, such as Article 6 matching funds for local health departments. Since a change in the law in 2019, NYC has lost \$90 million a year in Article 6 funding.

“Policymakers can significantly increase investment in public health, and the general public can demand and support it. I’m talking about sustained investment over the long term, not just during an emergency...The greater the investment in public health programs and education, the better our collective health outcomes, and the less devastating any future pandemic or comparable crisis will be.”

Dr. Dave Chokshi, September 2020
(Commissioner of Health, August 2020 – March 2022)

“Public service is about more than just government, it’s about partnerships with key community, nonprofit, and private stakeholders -fundamental pillars of our civic infrastructure - working towards shared goals for a better and healthier future.”

Dr. Ashwin Vasan, January 2024
(Commissioner of Health, March 2022 – October 2024)

Data Sources:

Office of the New York City Comptroller
New York City Department of Health & Mental Hygiene:
HealthyNYC: New York City's Campaign for Healthier
A Chronic Disease Strategy for New York City
Summary of Vital Statistics

Additional Resources:

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene www.nyc.gov/site/doh

New York State Department of Health www.health.ny.gov

Fund for Public Health NYC, an independent nonprofit organization with the purpose of connecting the NYC Health Department to private sector partners and the greater philanthropic community. www.fphnyc.org

American Public Health Association (APHA) The APHA serves as a convener, catalyst and advocate to build capacity in the public health community. www.apha.org

“The Invisible Shield,” a four-part documentary series examines how public health makes modern life possible, but it is underfunded, undervalued and misunderstood, putting our health at risk. www.theinvisibleshieldseries.com



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