



Best Practice: Health Policy Agenda Towards Measurable Targets

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CITY: NEW YORK CITY

POLICY AREA: PUBLIC HEALTH

BEST PRACTICE

Take Care New York of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) is a comprehensive health policy that serves as the organizing principle to help New Yorkers live longer and healthier lives. First launched in 2004, **Take Care New York** identified 10 steps New Yorkers could take to improve their health and set ambitious goals for 2008. In 2009, **Take Care New York 2012** was introduced, setting out 10 new priority areas and goals, selected for their public health importance and proven amenability to improvement.

ISSUE

Take Care New York is New York City's comprehensive health policy agenda. It lays out the health department's plans to help all New Yorkers live longer and healthier lives, and it offers ideas for how individuals can improve their own health, as well as how organizations can help them do it. **Take Care New York 2012** recognizes that improving health requires coordinated action from all New Yorkers: individuals and families, health care providers, community organizations, businesses and government.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Take Care New York 2012 encourages action – innovative and achievable ways by which individuals, health care providers, businesses, government agencies, schools, and community and faith-based organizations can improve the health of all New Yorkers. **Take Care New York 2012's** objectives include: 1) **Policies:** developing laws, regulations and other policies that will improve environmental, economic and social conditions affecting health; 2) **Prevention, Quality and Access:** emphasizing preventive health care, improving quality of care and expanding access to care; 3) **Health Promotion:** informing, educating and engaging New Yorkers to improve their health and the health of their communities. In each of the 10 areas, DOHMH reviewed trend data, assessed the health status among all New Yorkers, established 2007 baselines, where possible, and set measurable targets to be reached by 2012. The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene measures and evaluates progress.

IMPLEMENTATION

The 10 **Take Care New York 2012** areas for intervention were selected because they represent health problems that:

- Present a large disease burden, killing thousands of New Yorkers and causing hundreds of thousands of preventable illnesses or disabilities each year.
- Have proven amenable to intervention and public action.
- Are best addressed through coordinated action by City agencies, public-private partnerships, health care providers, businesses, and individuals.

From its inception in 2004, **Take Care New York** has focused upon:

- Increasing public awareness through media campaigns and broad distribution of educational materials.
- Building and engaging a network of nearly 500 partner organizations in all five boroughs of New York City that support the **Take Care New York 2012** agenda and are committed to improving the health of their employees, constituents, patients, and communities.



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- Developing and promoting a policy agenda that addresses barriers to health care access and optimal use of preventive health services.
- Building on existing DOHMH programs and establishing new initiatives to achieve **Take Care New York's** goals.

The New York City DOHMH recognizes that some communities and populations are in greater need of public health and health care services than others. **Take Care New York 2012** sets specific goals to reduce health disparities and make all New York City neighborhoods healthy and safe places.

Take Care New York's growing list of partners includes hospitals, health centers, insurers, community and faith-based organizations, universities, and other New York City agencies, each working with the Health Department on one or more health priorities, increasing DOHMH's ability to reach all New Yorkers in all neighborhoods.

Take Care New York 2012 builds upon progress made since 2004: more is now known about the health of New Yorkers, about interventions that work, and about challenges ahead. New aspects of the **Take Care New York 2012** plan focus on:

- Ways for organizations and public policies to improve health, in addition to what can be done by individuals and medical providers.
- Children's health focusing on the unique and important health needs of children and our opportunity to promote life-long healthy behaviors.
- Neighborhood conditions that impact health, such as access to healthy, affordable foods and safe homes.
- Health disparities among New Yorkers of different races, ethnicities and income levels, setting ambitious goals to reduce them by 2012.

Working together, New York City aims to:

- Promote Quality Health Care for All
- Be Tobacco Free
- Promote Physical Activity and Healthy Eating
- Be Heart Healthy
- Stop the Spread of HIV and Other Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Recognize and Treat Depression
- Reduce Risky Alcohol Use and Drug Dependence
- Prevent and Detect Cancer
- Raise Healthy Children
- Make All Neighborhoods Healthy Places

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has learned a tremendous amount about the health status of New Yorkers since the launch of **Take Care New York** in 2004. From 2004 to 2008, significant progress was made in most of the priority areas. In fact, by 2007, New Yorkers had surpassed goals in four priority areas—reducing the number of adults who smoke, increasing colorectal cancer screenings, increasing regular access to primary care, and reducing intimate-partner homicide. The progress of the initiative was tracked and documented in annual reports available through the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's website.

TIMELINE

September 2009—Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Health Commissioner Thomas A. Farley launched **Take Care New York 2012** and were joined by NYC Commissioners of Transportation and Housing Preservation and Development.



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Spring 2010—Take Care New York 2012 launched the first partner e-newsletter to keep partners up-to-date on DOHMH news and resources, community health events, and policy priorities.

Spring 2010—Take Care New York 2012 provides partners an updated website, suggesting specific actions and activities all partners can participate in to improve the health of New Yorkers and allow partners to share resources and information with each other.

LESSONS LEARNED

In 2004, when **Take Care New York** was conceived, DOHMH selected the 10 key areas, reviewed baseline data, and determined goals for 2008 in each area. DOHMH identified evidence-based best practices, brought together partners, and created many Take Care New York tools and educational materials.

In developing **Take Care New York 2012**, DOHMH selected the 10 new areas based upon evolving public health priorities and the potential to improve health. **Take Care New York 2012** is an action plan for improvement – of physical and social environments, of the health care system, and of behaviors that impact health.

CONTACTS

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Related Publications and Information available at: <http://www.nyc.gov/health/tcny>.

- Take Care New York 2012 Policy Document
- City Health Information: Take Care New York 2012: A Policy for a Healthier New York City
- Health Bulletin: Take Care New York 2012
- Annual Progress Reports for Take Care New York, 2005-2009