

Table of Contents

(Click to jump to section)

Welcome

Message from the
Deputy CMO

FIFA and NYC Summer
Events

Violence Prevention
Initiative

Spotlight on CERCA
(Coalition to End
Racism in Clinical
Algorithms)

Temp CHEC (Climate,
Health, Environment,
and Change)

Events and Services

Recent Publications



Welcome to our **Summer 2026 issue of *The Bridge***, keeping you updated, informed, and connected with the New York City (NYC) Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (Health Department) and the Office of the Chief Medical Officer (CMO).

Your input and collaboration are vital to our mission of protecting and promoting the health of all New Yorkers. Please let us know what you would like to see in future newsletters or find out how to connect with the NYC Health Department by emailing us at chiefmedicalofficer@health.nyc.gov.

Message From the NYC Health Department's Deputy CMO

June marks a new era for the Office of the CMO. We said farewell to our inaugural CMO, Dr. Michelle Morse, who dedicated more than five years of service to the NYC Health Department. She is an inspiration to many, including me. Her vision and leadership embedded change in the fabric of health care in NYC. You can read more about her efforts in her message in the [last issue](#) of *The Bridge*.

One of the most notable of these efforts is the development of the [Coalition to End Racism in Clinical Algorithms \(CERCA\)](#). CERCA examines how race-adjusted clinical tools have contributed to inequities in healthcare by reinforcing false assumptions about biological differences between racial groups. The coalition works with healthcare systems, public health leaders, clinicians, and community members to eliminate these practices and improve patient outcomes. It required the collaboration and support of many in health systems, such as and including yours, across NYC.



(Left to right) Dr. Michelle Morse, former CMO, James McDonald, NYS Health Commissioner, and Dr. Toni Eyssallenne, Deputy CMO, at the final convening of the Coalition to End Racism in Clinical Algorithms.

CERCA is now a model to support health systems across the country, and leadership at the New York State (NYS) Department of Health (DOH) will be adapting the model at the state level. We are proud and grateful to have worked with all those involved throughout NYC and NYS to build this coalition and move it forward. Read more about our last CERCA meeting below.

Over these past formative years, we have intentionally focused our work on three [strategic priorities](#): Bridging Public Health and Health Care, Advancing Antiracism in Public Health Practice and Policy, and Building Institutional Accountability. The first, Bridging Public Health and Health Care, represents our work to strengthen alignment and partnership between public health and health care delivery. The second, Advancing Antiracism in Public Health Practice and Policy, defines our collaborative projects with health care delivery partners to further health equity across NYC. The third, Building Institutional Accountability, covers our work to increase accountability and transparency by the Health Department and health care delivery partners in key areas. The Office of the CMO is now working to unify these concepts and workstreams under one main goal to: Bridge Public Health and Health Care.

I encourage you to join us in this work. Connect with us on the projects, events, and services discussed in these newsletters by emailing us at chiefmedicalofficer@health.nyc.gov.

Sincerely,
Toni Eyssallenne, MD, PhD
Deputy Chief Medical Officer
Office of the Chief Medical Officer
NYC Health Department

Bridging Public Health and Health Care

FIFA and NYC Summer Events

From June to July 2026, New York and New Jersey comprise a central hub for the 2026 FIFA World Cup. Eight matches are being held at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey, including the final match on July 19. Other large high-profile events, including the Sail 250 parade of tall ships, have occurred or will occur during the same time.

The NYC Health Department has launched a [Summer Events: Information for Providers](#) webpage to keep NYC healthcare providers updated and informed on public health issues that may affect FIFA attendees and other visitors in NYC. The page includes clinical considerations and resources for risks such as heat-related illness, infectious disease, civil unrest, and more.

We welcome you to engage with us:

- Fill out [this survey](#) to help us better understand provider needs and preferred communication mechanisms during both emergency and non-emergency times.
- Submit a comment to the Office of the CMO using the [FIFA World Cup Comment Form](#) for any non-emergent questions or comments pertaining to the FIFA World Cup.
- Subscribe to the [NYC Health Alert Network](#) for urgent public health communications for providers and to [Notify NYC](#) for general emergency alerts.

Violence Prevention Initiative

June is recognized as Gun Violence Awareness Month. The NYC Health Department has invested in violence prevention since 2012. Over the years, the program has evolved into the [Violence Prevention Initiative](#). This initiative aims to reduce risk factors for violence by addressing behavioral and structural barriers and investing in neighborhoods most affected by violence. It includes two core programs that apply public health principles to reduce violence through community-led interventions, CHWs, and clinicians.

- The **Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Program** (HVIP) seeks to reduce the risk of readmissions and re-injury due to violence. NYC HVIP involves partnerships between hospital systems and community-based organizations that deploy CHWs to the bedsides of violently injured people to provide them with conflict mediation and referrals to resources and services.
- The **Strong Messenger Project** (SMP) sends engaged, experienced, and culturally attuned mental health professionals to provide tailored therapeutic support to CHWs whose lived experiences inform their violence prevention work. The SMP offers clinical group sessions and professional development and promotes coping skills to help build team cohesion and emotional balance among CHWs.

To learn more, email violenceprevention@health.nyc.gov.

Spotlight on Coalition to End Racism in Clinical Algorithms (CERCA)

Final Convening

CERCA members representing health systems throughout NYC gathered for their third and final in-person convening on May 28, 2026, at the NYC Health Department in Long Island City, Queens, to celebrate what we have shared and learned over the past four years. CERCA included four subcommittees dedicated to de-implementing race-based estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR) equations, pulmonary function testing (PFT), vaginal birth after cesarean section (VBAC) risk calculator, and hypertension guidelines. Members of each subcommittee presented highlights from their work and progress. Dr. Michelle Morse, former CMO, Dr. Toni Eyssallenne, Deputy CMO, and Dr. James McDonald, NYS Health Commissioner, provided remarks.

Through CERCA, the [NYC Health Department facilitated change through](#)

- **NYC Health Department's credibility**, which provided urgency to the issue of racism in clinical algorithms and helped gain support at the health system level.
- **Collective advocacy**, in which the NYC Health Department and CERCA members worked together to compel change. For instance, advocacy to remove race adjustment from PFT equations included meetings with the American Thoracic Society (ATS) and an open letter



Aisiri Murulidhar, Product Health System Manager for the Office of the Chief Medical Officer, greets attendees of the final convening of the Coalition to End Racism in Clinical Algorithms.



(Left to right) Dr. Michelle Morse and Dr. Toni Eyssallenne

to the ATS, signed by Health Department leaders, CERCA members, and clinical leaders from around the country.

- **Implementation support**, including providing members with templates for planning their implementation activities. **View the toolkit at the Digital Medicine Society's website: [Removing Harmful Race-based Clinical Algorithms: A Toolkit](#).**

- **Learning from peers and experts:** CERCA members shared information about implementation challenges, successes, and best practices.
- **Accountability:** CERCA helped keep members “accountable to each other.” Hearing others’ success stories motivated members to work toward change.

“This is not a math problem that we’re solving,” Dr. Morse said in her opening remarks. “This is a justice problem. It’s a racism problem. It’s an equity problem. It’s a society problem. For us to take it from a math problem to that bigger framework together has been a joy to be a part of and to witness.”



Dr. Michelle Morse gives opening remarks.



Dr. Toni Eyssallenne gives closing remarks.

Do not go where the path may lead,” Dr. Eyssallenne said in her closing remarks, “Go where there’s no path and then leave a trail. And that’s what CERCA has done. I’m so proud of all the work that we have been able to do together, and I’m looking forward to the change that’s going to come.”

The work will now continue through NYS.

Transition to State Leadership

Members of the NYS DOH—Annabelle Bangs, MPA, Excelsior Fellow, Office of Health Equity and Human Rights, and Beverly Rausch, MS, Director, Wadsworth Center, Clinical Laboratory Evaluation Program (CLEP)—joined the meeting to share their **progress on scaling up CERCA within NYS.**

NYS Health Commissioner, Dr. James McDonald, offered his strong support for the work of CERCA and the elimination of health inequities in closing remarks to the attendees.

“I’m not suggesting these are the two most powerful words in public health, but they are powerful. Those two words are, ‘What’s next?’ It’s great work, but there are more algorithms to unpack. We’re committed to working on that with you... We’re committed to seeing this through.”



Dr. James McDonald speaks to attendees.

Focus on Community Health Workers

CHWs in the Health Advocacy Partners Program (HAPP) played a vital role in CERCA as part of its Community Advisory Board. They presented their

work and experiences during the final convening of CERCA.

Over the past year, six CHWs participated in monthly meetings of CERCA subcommittees, where they learned from and collaborated with healthcare providers, health systems, and the NYC Health Department to address race-based prescribing practices. In these meetings, CHWs

emphasized the critical role they play in patient advocacy. As trusted members of the communities they serve, they build relationships that continue to earn that trust, and work to foster understanding and communication between patients and healthcare providers.

Rose Khan, a CHW with [Community Mediation Services](#), works closely with Bengali families as they navigate the health care system. “Many Bengali families face language barriers and are affected by conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, heart disease,



Rose Khan gives a presentation.



Terresa Gordon (far left), Partner Coordinator, and Donna Banzon (far right), Director of Provider and Community Engagement, for the Office of the Chief Medical Officer pose with community health workers and other partners at the final convening of the Coalition to End Racism in Clinical Algorithms.

and kidney disease, conditions that are sometimes misdiagnosed or under-recognized because of biased clinical algorithms. Through my experience in CERCA, I can bring back training and resources that help me educate and support Bengali residents in ways that respect their culture, language, and lived realities.”



Cecilia Chabani speaks to attendees.

In the PFT subcommittee, Cecilia Chabani, a CHW with [RiseBoro Community Partnership](#), reflected on the importance of collaboration and patient education in advancing health equity. “We worked as partners, and they trusted us to use our methods of teaching and valued our lived experience. Together, we helped develop practical patient education tools,

including a video about proper inhaler use. This reflected CERCA’s goal of creating resources that help patients better understand and manage their care.”

Temp CHEC (Climate, Health, Environment, and Change)

NYC Health System Climate Resilience Community of Practice

Health systems are on the front lines of addressing the health impacts of climate change, but, unlike for environmental sustainability, they lack a space to share best practices and challenges across their organizations. To fill the gap, in March 2026, the NYC Health Department launched the “NYC Health System Climate Resilience Community of Practice.” Members represent nearly all major NYC health systems, plus supporting organizations. They bring perspectives from clinical care and research to facilities and sustainability, community and population health, and emergency preparedness.

At its last meeting, the Community of Practice explored screening protocols for climate health vulnerability.

- What social and environmental factors should be included?
- What clinical measures or social support actions should follow?
- How can this be scaled, given time constraints in the hospital setting?

While there is no universal climate health screening protocol, health systems, including those in NYC, are pursuing promising pilots, and there is opportunity to work together. Additionally, AmeriCares developed a [Climate Resilience for Frontline Clinics Toolkit](#) with practical resources, including suggested prompts to guide people to develop an action plan for heat or other extreme weather events.

The Community of Practice meets monthly on Teams. Future topics may include incorporating climate change into community health needs assessments and other planning tools, workforce development, and climate resilient infrastructure.

For more information about the Community of Practice, contact Laura Bozzi at lbozzi@health.nyc.gov.

Events and Services

Events

Bureau of Immunization Office Hours

The Bureau of Immunization holds office hours for health care providers on the first Wednesday of every month from 12 pm to 1 pm. **Staff will be available to answer questions about reporting to the Citywide Immunization Registry, the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, vaccine recommendations and guidelines, measles, respiratory syncytial virus, and other topics.** Email nycimmunize@health.nyc.gov with the subject line, “Provider Office Hours Distribution List” to receive registration details.

The Bureau of Immunization also has updated their webpage, [Immunization Information for Health Care Professionals](#). The page highlights information about immunization policy, recommendations, and practice in NYC, including sections on:

- Perinatal Hepatitis B vaccination
- Vaccination against respiratory viruses
- Vaccination during pregnancy
- Shared clinical decision-making
- Notification letters and health advisories

You can find additional resources for parents, including videos, posters, and handouts.

Pediatric Asthma Lunch and Learn Webinar Series

Join NYC Health + Hospitals and Lincoln Hospital for the remaining sessions of their [Lunch and Learn Pediatric Asthma Webinar Series](#), which will be held virtually on [July 31](#), [August 28](#), and [September 25](#), from 12:15 pm to 1 pm. The sessions will cover asthma management in schools, the South Bronx Asthma Partnership and asthma quality improvement efforts in the Bronx, home environmental remediation programs, and CHW programs.

Services

Bureaus of Neighborhood Health

The NYC Health Department has bureaus placed locally in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Harlem; learn more about the **health and wellness services and classes** available to people in these communities.

- [Bronx Health Services](#)
- [Brooklyn Health Services](#)
- [Harlem Health Services](#)

NYC Health Clinics

The NYC Health Department offers **sexual health, immunization, and tuberculosis (TB) services** at [clinics](#) located throughout NYC. Our clinics proudly serve all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status, and support our LGBTQ+ communities. They accept all types of insurance, including Medicare Part B and Medicaid.

- [Sexual Health Clinics](#): These facilities provide low- and no-cost confidential services for sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. Clinics are available in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, and Manhattan.
- [Immunization Clinic](#): The Fort Greene Health Center in Brooklyn provides immunizations recommended for children age 4 years and older, teens, and adults. Additional community health centers offering similar services are available in Manhattan and Staten Island.
- [Tuberculosis Chest Centers](#): Anyone at risk for TB can get a free evaluation and treatment at a chest center. Chest centers are located in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, and Manhattan.

Recent Publications

- Morse M, Eyssalenne T, Crouch B. [Public Health's Misinformation Era](#). *NEJM Catal Innov Care Deliv*. 2026;7(6).
- NYC Health Department. [Screening for colorectal cancer](#). *City Health Information*. 2026;45(1):1-12.
- NYC Health Department. [2026 Health Alert #16: Clinical Considerations for FIFA World Cup 2026 and Other Mass Gathering Events this Summer](#). June 24, 2026.
- NYC Health Department. [2026 Health Alert #15: Protect People at Risk of Heat-Related Death During Extreme Heat](#). June 10, 2026.
- NYC Health Department. [2026 Health Advisory #14: Tick-borne Diseases in New York City](#). June 2, 2026.
- NYC Health Department. [Letter: Current Guidance for Blood Lead Testing and Management for Pediatric and Adult Patients, Including Pregnant People](#). June 1, 2026.
- NYS Department of Health, NYC Health Department. [Advisory #13: New York State Health Advisory: Legionellosis](#). June 1, 2026.
- NYS Department of Health, NYC Health Department. [Advisory #12: Ebola Outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda](#). May 21, 2026.
- NYC Health Department. [2026 Health Alert #11: Protect People at Risk of Heat-Related Death During Extreme Heat](#). May 19, 2026.
- NYC Health Department. [2026 Health Alert #10: Public Health Preparations for 2026 FIFA World Cup & Provider Preferences Survey](#). May 14, 2026.
- NYC Health Department. [2026 Health Advisory #9: Reduce Health Impacts Caused by Air Quality Events During Wildfire Season](#). May 12, 2026.
- NYC Health Department. [2026 Health Advisory #8: Andes Strain Hantavirus Outbreak Associated with Cruise Ship](#). May 8, 2026.
- NYC Health Department. [2026 Health Advisory #7: Syphilis Treatment Options Given Ongoing Long-Acting Benzathine Penicillin G Injectable Suspension Shortage](#). April 17, 2026.