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Welcome to ***The Bridge!*** We hope this newsletter keeps you updated, informed, and connected with the NYC Health Department. Your input and collaboration are vital to our mission of protecting and promoting the health of all New Yorkers. We would love to hear from you — please share your thoughts and feedback on what else you would like to see in this newsletter, or inquire about how to connect with the Health Department by emailing us at chiefmedicalofficer@health.nyc.gov.

Thank you for your partnership and commitment to a more just and equitable New York City!

CMO Strategic Plan Updates

Domain 1: Bridging Public Health and Health Care

The Office of the CMO has a new [Long COVID page](#) for providers on the NYC Health Department website. Long COVID is an important and emerging clinical and public health issue, especially for individuals who were and continue to be disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and continue to experience structural barriers to comprehensive care. The page includes diagnostic and treatment information and resources for providers, including webinars. Also included is a recently published [letter](#) discussing current knowledge about Long COVID, including pathophysiology, clinical considerations for evaluation, strategies for prevention, and patient centered resources for providers on the NYC Health Department website.

Domain 2: Advancing the NYC Health Department's Commitment to Antiracism in Public Health Practice and Policy

Public Health Detailing Launches a Tobacco Treatment Campaign

The Public Health Detailing (PHD) program works with primary care providers, pharmacists, and other clinical professionals to improve care delivery related to key public health challenges. PHD recently launched a Tobacco Treatment Campaign to promote the NYC Health Department's effort to reframe tobacco use treatment as an appropriate clinical intervention for all individuals regardless of their readiness to quit. While smoking rates have declined in recent years, nearly 600,000 New Yorkers still smoke and need support. Additionally, more than 400,000 adult New Yorkers now use e-cigarettes; nearly half of them never previously smoked. Racism and structural inequity expose certain communities to more harmful factors that encourage smoking and vaping (eg, industry marketing and retailer access) and fewer protective factors (eg, treatment support).

To support health care providers in addressing tobacco treatment with all people, PHD, along with colleagues from the Tobacco Programs Unit within the NYC Health Department's Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention, created the [Tobacco Treatment Action Kit](#) for distribution to primary care and family practices in neighborhoods in which smoking rates have not decreased equally among all New Yorkers. The kit contains resources for providers and clients that support implementation of 4 evidence-based recommendations:

1. Ask people about their tobacco use history and offer treatment to all people who smoke or vape.
2. Develop a treatment plan, including counseling, medications, and follow-up, based on the person's goals, whether they want to quit, reduce use, or avoid smoking in specific situations.
3. Assess the person's goals and progress on the treatment plan at every visit.
4. Establish a practice workflow to ensure adequate follow-up and ongoing assessment of patient progress

Specific highlights in the [Action Kit](#) include the Tobacco Treatment Prescribing Guide; How to Use Tobacco Treatment Medications: A Pocket Guide; and the How Can I Get Tobacco Treatment Medications? Insurance Guide.

Domain 3: Building Institutional Accountability

In 2022, New Yorkers voted to pass three historic ballot measures that embed racial equity and justice into city government. One of these was for NYC to develop and launch a Racial Equity Plan. This summer, the NYC Health Department, led by our CMO and Chief Equity Officer (CEqO), developed nine goals for submission to NYC's larger Racial Equity Plan:

Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
Create and implement a structure to report bias (implicit and explicit) and interpersonal, institutional, and structural racism within the NYC Department.	Ensure that equity is embedded in enforcement practices and associated policies in order to support dismantling systemic and structural racism and bias.	Ensure pay equity for agency employees inclusive of race/ethnicity and gender in alignment with duties and the true cost of living standard in NYC.
Update priority neighborhoods considering current Action Center catchment areas for focused Agency investment and programming to address health inequities and distribute resources where most needed.	Develop and implement strategies to cultivate strong, trusting relationships with Minority and Women owned Business Enterprises M/WBE and not-for-profit services providers and vendors.	Eliminate racial inequities in patient satisfaction for Article 28 and 36 programs, fostering inclusivity and equity and elevating the standard of care offered.
	Develop and integrate specific racial equity goals into HealthyNYC during next 5-year goal setting process.	
	Develop, fund, and launch at least three truth and reconciliation projects focused on repairing health inequities cause by government policies or actions.	
	Establish the NYC Health Department as a Response Ready Organization that responds equitably, effectively, and rapidly to the full range of public health issues that affect NYC residents, while looking after the wellness of its staff.	

Temp CHEC (Climate, Health, Environment & Change)

The Office of the CMO is pleased to present a new segment of our newsletter entitled “CHEC the Pulse.” Climate change is a pressing issue in public health and health equity. From poor air quality due to forest fires to historic rainfalls and storms that compromise housing, electricity, coastal areas, infrastructure, and transportation, climate change has a powerful impact on everyone, especially vulnerable populations. We will share resources, insight, and information on climate issues in this segment.

Climate change is causing more common and more severe flooding from rainfall (eg, Hurricane Ida) and coastal storms in NYC (eg, Superstorm Sandy). Storms and flooding have long-term citywide health consequences, ranging from infrastructure damage, strain on energy systems, unprecedented heat events, and changes to coastal wetlands. NYC is a city of islands, wetlands, and other low-lying areas, making heavier storms increasingly dangerous for its residents. Individuals with respiratory illnesses are vulnerable to unmitigated mold that may develop. People living in basement apartments may face life-threatening conditions when heavy rain causes rapid flooding with little notice. People who rely on electric medical devices and individuals with impaired mobility are more urgently affected by power outages.

Help keep your patients safe with these preparedness tips:

- **Encourage people to sign up for emergency notifications from Notify NYC** at nyc.gov/NotifyNYC or call 311. Before and during an emergency, NYC will send emergency alerts and updates to New Yorkers through Notify NYC and other channels.
- **Support people who rely on electric-powered medical equipment in registering to be contacted by their utility provider during an emergency.** They will likely need a form signed by their physician. Find more information at https://www.nyc.gov/assets/em/downloads/pdf/outage_dme_card.pdf.
- **Recommend that people living in basement apartments create a plan to access higher floors during periods of heavy rain.** When screening, identify people who live in basement apartments and encourage them to sign up for [Notify NYC](https://nyc.gov/NotifyNYC) and select the special messages for basement apartment dwellers.
- **Provide guidance on [how to safely clean contaminated areas and prevent mold growth](#) in a flooded home.** Flood water may contain bacteria, petroleum, and chemicals. Mold can grow in a flooded home that is not properly cleaned and dried out.

Want to learn more?

- NYC Health Department’s new data story, [“What Hurricane Ida and Superstorm Sandy taught us about flooding and health”](#)
- NYC Emergency Management’s preparedness guidance: [Get Prepared](#)

Ways to engage

- [The Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health](#)

Agency Updates

Harlem Bureau of Neighborhood Health

From March through August, the Harlem Bureau of Neighborhood Health (BNH), in collaboration with the Human Services Consortium of East Harlem, hosted a series of nine On-Site Service Pop-Up Resource Fairs for the newest New Yorkers at the East Harlem Neighborhood Health Action Center. Approximately 30 community-based organizations and government agencies participated in the fair, attracting approximately 1,000 event attendees. The resource fair was organized to support people seeking asylum and immigrants in East Harlem/Harlem, providing them with essential resources, information, and services to help them integrate into the community and navigate the challenges they face. This event aimed to connect participants with local organizations, legal aid, healthcare providers, educational opportunities, and other critical services. Key activities at the fair included clothing distribution, benefit navigation, legal aid consultations, health screenings, and more.

Brooklyn Bureau of Neighborhood Health

Our work in the Brooklyn BNH continues as we tackle health inequities in maternal health, chronic disease, and other health and social needs within the most disinvested communities in North and Central Brooklyn.

Maternal Health

- The Family Wellness Suites (FWS) are safe and supportive spaces for women, caregivers, and their families to connect to community resources and city agency services. The FWS provide services before, during, and after pregnancy. Services include childbirth education and newborn care classes, parenting classes, infant massage, reproductive health workshops, referrals, and more. They can refer families to services that help avoid eviction, enroll in health insurance, and find employment. For more information, call 718-312-6136 or email brooklynfws@health.nyc.gov.
- The NYC Health Department released the [State of Doula Care in NYC Report 2024](#), led by the [Citywide Doula Initiative](#) (CDI). The CDI is part of the New Family Home Visits Initiative, which provides free access to home visitors and doula support for birthing people and parenting families. Doulas from this initiative provide professional, no-cost doula services to residents of neighborhoods that have been especially affected by COVID. For eligibility and connections, please visit the [Citywide Doula Initiative page](#).

Public Health Corps: Health Advocacy Partners Program

Health Advocacy Partners Program (HAPP) is part of Public Health Corps, a citywide initiative that employs trusted community members to serve as frontline public health workers to address health inequities in NYC. In collaboration with the NYC Housing Authority (NYCHA), three CBOs (RiseBoro Community Partnerships, Health People Inc., and Community Mediation Services) work directly with residents of Marcy Houses (Brooklyn), Butler Houses (Bronx), and Queensbridge Houses (Long Island City) to make health education resources, activities, and peer support more accessible. HAPP CBOs have established a strong foundation for their work that will continue through next year. Highlights from the first three months of programming (April-June 2024) include:

- 25 community health workers (CHWs) and 6 CHW supervisors hired, onboarded, and trained by CBOs
- 2,267 NYCHA residents reached through community engagement efforts
- 57 external CBOs and agencies collaborated with HAPP to implement health and wellness workshops and civic engagement activities
- 1,418 residents participated in 140 health and wellness workshops on topics that ranged from diabetes, asthma, hypertension, and healthy cooking to mental health, peer support, art therapy, and exercise
- 264 residents enrolled in a 6-month health coaching program to support their management of chronic health conditions

Upcoming Events

Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support Class

We offer a free diabetes self-management education support program in collaboration with local partners. Classes are 2 hours long and are offered on a weekly basis. Classes run 5 or 6 weeks. People who complete 5 classes receive a free Fit Bit while supplies last.

- [Register for the class series](#). You can also [sign up to receive updates](#) for when new classes are scheduled. Online and in-person sessions are available. Upcoming in-person sessions include:
- 2025 Dates TBD.
- For more information on dates, location and questions, contact Tanisha Herrera-Pearce at 718-637-5226 or email therrera@health.nyc.gov.

Chronic Disease Self-Management Program

This 6-week virtual workshop supports those with or at risk for hypertension to learn how to manage symptoms and medications, eat healthy, and create an exercise program. Classes take place in English, but interpretation is available upon request. For interpretation, contact us at least 72 hours before the first class. Participants may be eligible to receive a free blood pressure monitor.

- Please contact BrooklynNH@Health.nyc.gov or call 718-637-5304 to sign up.
- For more information on these and other programs, please visit the [Bedford Health Center](#) page.

Recent Publications

- “Moving from indifference to reparative action: a public health approach to racial health inequities in life expectancy in cities in the USA” was published in the December 2024 issue of the Lancet: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0140673624026655>
- “New York City’s public health approach to reexamining race-based clinical algorithms” was published in the October 2024 issue of the New England Journal of Medicine Catalyst Innovations in Care Delivery: <https://catalyst.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/CAT.24.0116>
- “Harlem Health Advocacy Partners: A Local Health Department’s Place-Based Community Health Worker Program” was published in the July/September 2024 issue of the Journal of Ambulatory Care Management: https://journals.lww.com/ambulatorycaremanagement/fulltext/2024/07000/harlem_health_advocacy_partners_a_local_health.7.aspx
- “Food Shopping Strategies Among a Diverse Sample of East Harlem Residents: A Qualitative Study” was published in the August 2024 issue of the American Journal of Health Promotion: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/08901171241273401>

New Staff

Dr. Vivian Cortés will be joining us as the Director of the Family Wellness Suites (across all 3 BNHs). Dr. Cortés received her MPH in Sexuality and Health from Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health and her PhD in Community Health and Health Policy from CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy. Dr. Cortés has over 20 years of public health experience. She has worked as a health educator, trainer, and consultant and is a dynamic leader with extensive experience in sexual and reproductive health and justice. Dr. Cortés was most recently the Assistant Director of Community Engagement for NYC Teens Connection. She joined the program in 2014 when it was originally Bronx Teens Connection. In her role, she helped lay the foundation of the Bronx community engagement programming and later expanded the infrastructure to include advisory teams across the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Staten Island. These teams included 50 NYC community leaders and 30 youth leaders. We are delighted to gain such a strong advocate for sexual and reproductive health.

In Memoriam

Dr. Lundy Braun passed on August 9, 2024. She was a passionate scholar whose groundbreaking work centered on the intersections of race, science, medicine, and public health. Through tireless research and advocacy, Dr. Braun illuminated the deeply embedded racial hierarchies that continue to shape health outcomes in the American healthcare system. She was a dedicated partner of the Office of the CMO as part of the Coalition to End Racism in Clinical Algorithms, specifically working on removing race correction in pulmonary function tests (PFTs). Her legacy lives on through her pioneering contributions to research and her students, colleagues, friends, and family, including her husband, John Trimbur. We will honor her by dedicating ourselves to organizing for justice and transformative change and prioritizing community voices in this work.

You can share feedback on what you would like to see in future issues of this newsletter or ask how to connect with NYC Health Department work by emailing chiefmedicalofficer@health.nyc.gov.

For more updates, follow [@nychealthy](https://twitter.com/nychealthy) and [@nychealthcmo](https://twitter.com/nychealthcmo) on Twitter.