



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE**
Ashwin Vasan, MD, PhD
Commissioner

Testimony

of

Ricky Wong
Assistant Commissioner for Government Affairs
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

before the

**New York City Council Committee on Health, Committee on Oversight and Investigations,
Committee on Housing and Buildings and Committee on Fire and Emergency Management**
on

Mayor's Management Report: Agency Performance on Inspections and Response

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New York, NY

Good morning Councilmembers, my name is Ricky Wong and I am the Assistant Commissioner for the Bureau of Government Affairs at the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. On behalf of Commissioner Vasan, thank you for the opportunity to testify today about DOHMH's MMR and Agency Performance in the context of Inspections and Responses.

The Health Department is charged with protecting and promoting the health of all New Yorkers. Those responsibilities include regulating a variety of businesses including, for example, restaurants and childcare centers. The Department issues permits, conducts education about requirements, and conducts unannounced inspections to check how well those businesses are performing. Inspections are conducted annually, and more often if the inspection shows poorer compliance, as well as in response to complaints.

As shown in the Mayor's Management Report, the Department inspected 83.4% of restaurants in FY23. This was a 12% increase over the prior FY, when inspectors were still engaged in COVID-19 emergency response work but short of our goal to inspect 100 percent of the city's restaurants. Over 6,500 childcare centers had a full inspection in FY23, up 7% from FY22. Centers without an inspection are typically inspected soon into the following year.

Regarding our pest control operations, in FY23, 22.3% of properties failed their initial inspection due to signs of rat activity, a 3.1 percentage point decline from Fiscal 2022. This improvement can be attributed to the City ramping up response efforts to neighborhood level rat infestations.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify here today. I would like to pass it on to my colleagues from NYC Department of Buildings.