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**MAYOR DE BLASIO APPOINTS HERMINIA PALACIO AS DEPUTY MAYOR FOR  
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

*Nationally-recognized expert in strategic long-term planning and crisis response to begin  
January 25*

*City also announces shifting roles for senior administration leadership half way through  
Administration*

**NEW YORK**—Mayor Bill de Blasio announced today the appointment of New York City native Herminia Palacio as Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services.

Palacio is a crisis management expert who as Executive Director of the Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services coordinated health services for 27,000 people from the New Orleans area to Houston during Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Her work during Hurricane Katrina earned Palacio the Excellence in Health Administration Award by the American Public Health Association in 2007. Palacio also previously served as a Senior Policy Advisor for the San Francisco Department of Public Health, where she served on the front lines combatting HIV/AIDS.

With 25 years of experience in a range of health and social services professions, Palacio will be tasked with addressing homelessness across the five boroughs, developing a citywide network for mental health support, coordinating across the City's public health care system, improving access to social services for all New Yorkers, and ensuring Agencies that oversee the City's most vulnerable populations, such as children and victims of domestic violence, are run compassionately and effectively.

As former Executive Director of Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services, Palacio is well-prepared to take on NYC's most pressing challenges, having played a major role in the Astrodome/Reliant Park mega-shelter operation for over 27,000 evacuees from Hurricane Katrina to Harris County, Texas. Running all of the public health operations for the shelter, Palacio established a public health department for a "city" that went from a population of 0 to 27,000 in two days, identified and contained health outbreaks before they started, and aptly managed thousands of physicians and nurses to effectively triage 150 patients an hour.

“Herminia is a born and bred New Yorker, and a tried and true leader. When she led the health department in Harris County, she took in and cared for thousands of evacuees from Hurricane Katrina with extraordinary capability and compassion. When she stood on the front lines of an HIV/AIDS crisis in San Francisco, her innovative approach to public health programming was lauded across the country and archived in a national museum of science. And when her hometown of New York City called on her to bring New Yorkers off the streets and into permanent housing, secure a bright future for our kids in foster care, and help us weave together fragmented mental health care providers into a comprehensive network, Herminia was ready to answer the call,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “I am proud to welcome her to this Administration and greatly anticipate the powerful work we will do with her at the helm of Health and Human Services.”

"New York City has my heart. It is my home. The opportunity to serve the people of New York City as a Deputy Mayor is a tremendous honor, particularly with this Administration, which has built on a foundation of equity and social justice that speaks the values that have motivated my work my entire life. It is a responsibility and privilege I cherish, and I want to thank Mayor de Blasio for this incredible opportunity," said **Herminia Palacio**.

Palacio’s experience and deft leadership in Harris County – which includes the city of Houston, Texas – and San Francisco, California is nationally-recognized and demonstrates her capability in both strategic long-term planning and crisis response. Throughout a storied career, Palacio has demonstrated strong dedication to public health issues and a clear ability to respond with innovative solutions that influence national policy.

Palacio enters her new role with extensive public health experience across a broad range of sectors, including academic, government, clinical and non-profit. She most recently served as Director of Advancing Change Leadership at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, where she was responsible for developing and implementing new health leadership programs. Prior to joining RWJF, she served as Executive Director of Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services, the local health department for more than four million people in Harris County, Texas.

As Deputy Mayor, Palacio will oversee the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, NYC Health + Hospitals, Human Resources Administration, Department of Homeless Services, Agency for Children's Services, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Office to Combat Domestic Violence and Office of Food Policy. She will also work closely with First Deputy Mayor Shorris and Commissioner Steve Banks in the on-going review of the City's homeless programs.

Palacio, 54, formally begins on January 25. She will earn \$227,737.

In other changes in the Administration, Deputy Mayor Alicia Glen, in addition to her current responsibilities, will take on oversight of the Department of Parks and Recreation as well as the Housing Recovery Office.

In addition to his existing roles, Deputy Mayor Buery will oversee the Department of Youth and Community Development, Department of Probation, Department of Aging, the Mayor's Offices

for Immigrant Affairs, Veterans Affairs, and People with Disabilities, as well as serving as the City's liaison to the City University of New York (CUNY).

First Deputy Mayor Shorris will continue to oversee all other agencies as well as the general operations of the government, including coordinating the work of the Department of Education and the Police Department.

Senior Advisor Bill Goldstein will be retiring from full-time City service. He will remain as an unpaid advisor to the First Deputy Mayor on construction matters and continue to serve on the MTA Capital Program Review Board on behalf of the City.

Dan Zarrilli will lead climate issues for the City, including the Office of Recovery and Resiliency, and the Office of Sustainability.

"I worked closely with Herminia during her time in the San Francisco Department of Public Health. She is a substantive, policy-focused, and innovative leader, who deftly managed San Francisco's AIDS crisis – serving as a compassionate voice for our city. Herminia is capable, engaging, and an excellent choice for Deputy Mayor," said **Gavin Newsom, Lieutenant Governor of California**.

**Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, President and CEO of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation** said, "We commend New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio for naming Herminia Palacio MD, MPH, an outstanding and nationally recognized public health leader, as NYC's Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services. Currently Director of our Advancing Change Leadership team, Herminia did a terrific job overseeing our health leadership programs, an important part of RWJF's effort to build a culture of health for everyone in America. NYC has long been a national and world leader in public health, and under Herminia's stewardship we are confident that it will continue to excel. We look forward to working with her in this important position."

"She is a brilliant leader who has succeeded in government service, patient care, university teaching and research, and philanthropy," said **Dr. Mitchell Katz, Director of the Los Angeles County Health Agency**. "She will be a great Deputy Mayor for New York City."

**Texas State Senator Sylvia R. Garcia** said, "Dr. Palacio's keen intellect, steady hand and inclusive nature got us through some difficult times in the Houston region. Whether a health care scare, an environmental concern, a hurricane emergency, or a contentious town hall meeting, she responded responsibly and efficiently, getting the job done. She knows and understands the needs of dynamic urban centers like Houston and New York – its diversity, its challenges and its opportunities. New York is lucky to get Dr. Palacio."

### **About Herminia Palacio**

In addition to her work at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, in Harris County and San Francisco, Palacio has also held a number of academic appointments, including adjunct professor in Management, Policy, and Community Health at the University of Texas School of Public Health at Houston from 2006 to 2014. She also taught at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston

and the University of California at San Francisco School of Medicine. Palacio received her medical degree from Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York and holds a Masters of Public Health, with a specialty in epidemiology, from the University of California at Berkeley School of Public Health, and a BA in biology from Barnard College at Columbia University. She has authored numerous articles in peer-reviewed scientific journals.

She served on the Board of Directors of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), the Texas Association of Local Health Officials (TALHO), the Harris County Healthcare Alliance (HCHA), and served as Chair of the Texas Public Health Coalition. She recently served on the Board of Scientific Counselors for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response and currently serves on the CDC Advisory Committee to the Director. In 2011 she was appointed by President Obama as a member of the Advisory Group on Prevention, Health Promotion, and Integrative and Public Health.

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