

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
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**MAYOR DE BLASIO, FIRST LADY MCCRAY ANNOUNCE A COLLABORATION
WITH U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE TO HELP HEALTH CARE WORKERS ON
THE FRONTLINES COPE WITH STRESS**

*City to provide additional emotional and mental support for frontline healthcare workers in
the fight against COVID-19*

NEW YORK—Mayor de Blasio and First Lady Chirlane McCray today announced a collaboration between the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), NYC Health + Hospitals, and Greater New York Hospital Association (GHNYA) to provide mental health programs to support health care workers and first responders on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. The new program will tailor elements of the US DoD’s combat stress management and resilience program for military personnel into needs assessments and a webinar training series to be used in civilian healthcare and first responder settings across the city. Trainings are expected to be available by the end of the month.

“Our frontline heroes are fighting a war on two fronts,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “They have been through so much to protect their fellow New Yorkers, and we will not allow them to shoulder the mental toll of this pandemic alone. To those who are struggling: your city hears you, we see you, and help is on the way.”

"Our city's medical professionals are laboring long days and nights under extraordinary circumstances, caring for our families and loved ones. It's a different kind of war, but they are truly soldiers," said **First Lady Chirlane McCray**. "As they continue caring for New Yorkers, we must care for them and their well-being. Their service goes beyond anything we could have asked for, and their mental health needs should not be overlooked. This partnership will ensure our healthcare workers on the frontlines have the support they need, now and after this crisis."

Behavioral health and staff support leaders at local hospitals will receive formal training from military subject matter experts. Those who receive training will facilitate trainings to mental health specialists, spiritual care and second victim program leads at their respective health care systems. The ‘Train the Trainer’ education will be available virtually on GHNYA hosted webinars for all participating NYC healthcare systems. To better support health care workers, in-person and virtual training sessions can be customized based on targeted needs assessments.

The US Department of Defense-led webinar trainings will begin late next month for health care systems. NYC Health + Hospitals will begin to deploy trainers for facility-based trainings in early June.

This work builds upon NYC Health + Hospitals' established "Help Healers Heal" program. The program offers frontline health care workers direct mental health support in the form of a dedicated, 24/7 behavioral health helpline staffed by psychiatrists/psychologists; peer support champions for one-on-one or group support; and 26 wellness areas across 11 hospitals and five skilled nursing facilities for staff to take a break from patient care areas. The program also supports wellness rounds at all facilities to actively engage employees working in areas heavily affected by COVID-19. Wellness rounds focus on identifying and supporting employees showing symptoms of anxiety, depression, fatigue and burnout, and connecting them to services if requested—including one-on-one telephonic, in-person debrief, or anonymous counseling.

"We are in the epicenter of this pandemic and our heroic healthcare workers are on the front lines providing lifesaving support to New Yorkers. Our providers are experiencing an immense amount of emotional-psychological trauma and stress, especially at our hardest-hit hospitals," said **NYC Health + Hospitals President and CEO Mitchell Katz, MD**. "At NYC Health + Hospitals, we value each employee and we are grateful to the Mayor and DoD that we will be able to support our workforce as they begin to process, heal and move forward."

"As our healthcare workers and first responders continue to battle on the front lines of our fight against COVID-19, we want to make sure we can take care of their emotional and psychological well-being. This program will be a cornerstone in helping them to navigate these traumatic events, and we are thankful to the DoD for lending their expertise to support the mental health of our heroes," said **NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Deanne Criswell**.

"Paramedics, EMTs, and all healthcare workers in New York City have been on the frontlines of this pandemic for weeks now. Though they have seen so much pain and loss, they continue to answer the call by caring for their patients every single day," said **Fire Commissioner Daniel A. Nigro**. "This partnership with the DoD will provide important additional mental healthcare and support for those heroic men and women bravely going into harm's way for our city."

"We must do everything we can to expand mental health support for our frontline health care workers. The partnership announced today is a critical piece of this work," said **Susan Herman, Senior Advisor to the Mayor and Director of the Mayor's Office of ThriveNYC**.

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