

# Mayor Adams Launches NYC Pandemic Response Institute

May 10, 2022

**NEW YORK** – New York City Mayor Eric Adams today launched the New York City Pandemic Response Institute (PRI), a new partnership with Columbia University and The City University of New York Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy (CUNY SPH) to help New York City learn from the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic and tackle the urgent public health emergencies currently facing New Yorkers — from infectious diseases to climate-related events.

“We can’t wait for the next COVID-19 to arrive to look for downstream responses — we have urgent public health crises in our city, and we need to proactively face them with upstream solutions,” said **Mayor Adams**. “The Pandemic Response Institute will bring together city agencies, experts across various fields, and nonprofit and for-profit partners to tackle some of the biggest, most intractable public health challenges for New Yorkers. I look forward to working with the PRI to help grow our public health toolbox with the strategic upstream solutions we need to tackle these crises.”

“On behalf of the Columbia community, I want to express how proud we are of this project and of our partnerships with the city and CUNY,” said **Columbia University President Lee C. Bollinger**. “The mission of the Pandemic Response Institute is to work with academic, community, government, and business partners across the five boroughs to make sure that the city is prepared for future public health emergencies. Its goal is to do this in a way that addresses the structural inequities that make marginalized populations particularly vulnerable to the effects of these kinds of crises.”

“CUNY is delighted to partner with Columbia University on an initiative so forward-thinking and vital to the health of New York City as the Pandemic Response Institute,” said **CUNY Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez**. “CUNY SPH’s expertise in urban public health and commitment to addressing health disparities — and the critical role that the school and CUNY as a whole have played in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic — make us well positioned to advance PRI’s community-centered approach and goals. We look forward to working with Columbia and PRI’s many partner

organizations to put health equity at the center of our city’s response to emerging health threats.”

A dynamic new resource designed to support New York City across the entire lifecycle of emergency preparedness, the PRI will help the city develop greater resilience to the adverse consequences of public health emergencies — maximizing engagement and impact across the city, particularly in underserved communities, with community-based locations in each borough.

In coordination with the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and New York City Emergency Management (NYCEM), the PRI will work with New Yorkers in communities across the five boroughs to develop locally tailored health solutions, information, and resources to prepare for, respond to, and recover from future health crises. The PRI previously received critical funding from the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC).

The PRI includes diverse partnerships with dozens of nonprofit, community, faith-based, research, and corporate entities — including Amazon and Cepheid — that responded to COVID-19 across New York City and are committed to the PRI’s whole-of-society approach. Together, this diverse group of contributors brings the necessary resources, expertise, commitment, and vision to the critical task of equipping New York City to prepare and respond to future public health emergencies and to invest in more robust infrastructure and greater health equity in New York City.

Following a request for proposals for the PRI last year, NYCEDC, DOHMH, and NYCEM reviewed and selected Columbia with key partner CUNY SPH, and the city awarded \$20 million in capital funding for eligible costs.

To learn more about the New York City Pandemic Response Institute, visit [pri.nyc](https://pri.nyc.gov).

“This cross-institutional team, led by Columbia University and with CUNY as a key partner, will make the Pandemic Response Institute’s vision a reality,” said **Deputy Mayor for Economic and Workforce Development Maria Torres-Springer**. “With its partners in government and industry, and working hand-in-hand with community leaders, the PRI will help all our communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from public health emergencies.”

"The Pandemic Response Institute is borne out of collaboration and partnership, with Columbia, CUNY, and so many other partners working together to prepare New York for present and future challenges," said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Anne Williams-Isom**. "The institute gets it right, knowing that it is by working together, across disciplines, and across institutions that will keep us truly safe. Thank you to the city partners, Columbia, CUNY, and all the other entities involved for making this possible. I look forward to working with the institute in the weeks, months, and years to come. "

"Preparing for the next generation of public health emergencies demands strengthening core and non-emergent public health infrastructure, including our frontline community health workforce, surveillance and interoperable data systems, strategic communication functions, and public health policy development — all with an eye toward addressing structural inequities in our recovery and ensuring strong relationships and partnership with communities," said **DOHMH Commissioner Dr. Ashwin Vasan**. "In support of government and a whole-of-society approach to pandemic response, PRI will help spur innovation and will be a vital public health workforce capacity builder and community partner. We look forward to being a part of PRI and to supporting all partners as our city continues to recover, heal, and prepare for a brighter, healthier future."

"Healthy New Yorkers are the foundation of a healthy economy. NYCEDC was pleased to champion the vision for the Pandemic Response Institute with city partners and advocate for this investment in public health funding that is so critical to an equitable economic recovery," said **NYCEDC President and CEO Andrew Kimball**. "Mayor Adams' vision for how our economy will rebuild, renew, and reinvent includes focusing on communities hardest hit by the pandemic to better guide public health policies. We thank Columbia and CUNY SPH for taking the first steps to drive engagement and wide support behind the Pandemic Response Institute's innovative and lifesaving work to come."

"At New York City Emergency Management, our mission is to help New Yorkers and their communities be prepared for any emergency," said **NYCEM Commissioner Zach Iscol**. "We support the Pandemic Response Institute's commitment to engaging our communities at all levels to be prepared for the next health crisis, while exploring and executing innovative ways to support those most vulnerable to disasters."

“Community is the operative word for PRI,” said **Dr. Wafaa El-Sadr, director, ICAP and Columbia World Projects**. “This initiative is all about bringing together every sector of this unique, dynamic, and remarkable metropolis — putting forth the best thinking, the most relevant data, the sharpest innovations, and, importantly, the most effective partnerships, so that everyone in our city is well prepared for the next major health threat — fully informed, engaged, safe and healthy.”

“This public-private partnership between two of the top public health academic institutions in New York City, along with other partners in the community, industry, academia, and government, promises to provide a wide range of experts in support of New York City’s strategy to prevent, prepare and recover from similar threats in the future,” said **Dr. Ayman El-Mohandes, dean, CUNY SPH**.

“The New York City Pandemic Response Institute will become a model for the country in how to rapidly respond to public health emergencies at scale,” said **Dr. Jennifer Rakeman PhD, senior director, medical affairs, public health programs, Cepheid**. “We are happy to be engaged with PRI in developing novel testing solutions that enable more effective, equitable, and accessible public health strategies for all New Yorkers.”

“Columbia University has assembled a world-class team that is uniquely positioned to advance the strategic priorities and goals of the New York City Pandemic Response Institute,” said **Prem Natarajan, vice president, Alexa AI, Amazon**. “We are delighted to support this important and timely initiative.”

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