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**MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES EXPANSION OF COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP  
TO ENCOURAGE SOCIAL DISTANCING AS PART OF NEW TASKFORCE ON  
RACIAL INCLUSION AND EQUITY RECOMMENDATIONS**

*Outreach workers trained in deescalating violence to help social distancing education; Partnership includes public awareness campaign addressing disparate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color*

**NEW YORK**—Mayor de Blasio today updated New Yorkers on steps the City is taking to encourage communities to follow social distancing guidelines and other precautions to stay safe during the coronavirus pandemic. Currently, 150 community ambassadors and violence interrupters from successful safety programs across the city are engaging the hardest-hit communities to educate residents about the importance of social distancing and to provide face coverings to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. The City will expand that outreach with 375 additional workers conducting social distancing education in these neighborhoods through September. The partnership will also include a public awareness campaign with equity-based messaging that addresses the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color. Social media and outdoor ads, printed materials and public service announcements will feature community voices from the hardest-hit neighborhoods.

“To safely re-open our city, we need to make sure New Yorkers have what they need to keep themselves and their neighbors safe, said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “Cure Violence will use the trust they’ve built with New Yorkers to help us save lives right in their neighborhoods and across the city.”

"As the City charts a path toward recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, community voices must have a seat at the table, and the taskforce is working to ensure that the hardest-hit communities have the resources they need to stay safe," said **First Lady Chirlane McCray**. “Programs like Cure Violence have proven that community members are effective educators and agents of change. The City is grateful to the Cure Violence movement for stepping up during this critical time.”

The community ambassadors are part of the New York City Crisis Management System (CMS) network of providers, which utilize the nationally recognized Cure Violence model, a neighborhood-based, public-health approach to violence reduction.

This work is supported by the administration's Taskforce on Racial Inclusion & Equity, which brings an equity-based approach to COVID-19 response and recovery efforts in hardest hit communities and will remain involved in social distancing implementation in the weeks ahead, continuing to leverage community voices that inform ongoing engagement as well as long-term strategies that support both the health and safety of communities.

The CMS program, part of the Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS) in the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, employ the nationally recognized Cure Violence model, a neighborhood-based, public-health approach to violence reduction. CMS works through its network of community-based outreach workers and violence interrupters in neighborhoods that are the most vulnerable to gun violence. Located in every borough, 20 CMS providers across 25 neighborhoods will engage local residents in these communities.

These workers use their personal relationships, social networks, and knowledge of their communities to help stop violence before it starts. They are joined in ONS by the Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety (MAP), which works to put residents in 15 NYCHA housing developments at the center of realizing community safety as envisioned by the community itself. Now, CMS, alongside efforts spearheaded by MAP, will help to educate those same communities on the importance of practicing social distancing and other guidelines to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

#### **ADMINISTRATION TASKFORCE ON RACIAL INCLUSION AND EQUITY**

The COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed the fatal consequences of racial disparities in America. This taskforce will be comprised of officials from across the Administration to engage hardest-hit communities, monitor response and recovery efforts in those neighborhoods, identify unique needs associated with Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) and community health care providers, and work with City officials and agencies to narrow long-standing racial and economic disparities. This taskforce will focus both on the immediate needs of these communities and shape a longer term strategy to close the gaps that have been exacerbated during this crisis. The taskforce is led by First Lady Chirlane McCray, Deputy Mayor J. Phillip Thompson and Deputy Mayor Raul Perea-Henze.

"The taskforce believes that local community leaders are among the most effective voices the City can engage to ensure that social distancing rules are understood and taken seriously by those we're trying to educate," said **J. Phillip Thompson, Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives and Co-Chair of the Taskforce on Racial Inclusion and Equity**. "Today's initiative reflects this belief, and our partnership with Cure Violence will allow neighbors to help neighbors within their own communities stay healthy and safe."

"Social distancing remains among the strongest tools we have to stop the spread of COVID-19 and promote healthy and safe neighborhoods during this challenging time," said **Dr. Raul Perea-Henze, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services and Co-Chair of the Taskforce on Racial Inclusion and Equity**. "Representatives from the hardest-hit communities serve as authentic and effective messengers in the effort to educate neighbors about social distancing, and we are pleased to partner with the community ambassadors on this initiative."

"If there is one thing that has been made clear by this unprecedented crisis is that the relationship between community and government is more important now than ever," said **Grace Bonilla, HRA Administrator and Executive Director of the Taskforce on Racial Inclusion and Equity**. "The disparities that have been highlighted in the last couple of months reinforce that we do our best work when community partners are at the table. The taskforce and the Administration are committed to finding community-based solutions that meet the needs of the hardest-hit neighborhoods."

"The interconnected work of CMS and MAP, now combined under the Office of Neighborhood Safety, have long been at the forefront of City efforts to promote resident-led public safety," said **Elizabeth Glazer, Director of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ)**. "The City's response to COVID-19 has only brought into stark relief the connection between public health and public safety. By engaging those already deeply involved inside communities, as CMS and MAP are, we recognize and honor this tremendous public resource in our ongoing battle against COVID-19."

"Since 2017, the CMS network of providers has worked directly with communities most impacted by another public health threat in gun violence," said **Eric Cumberbatch, Deputy Director of the Office of Neighborhood Safety**. "The lessons learned and strategies developed by residents and providers alike make for a successful antidote to the current public health and safety threat posed by COVID-19. New York City's CMS providers are already at work engaging their neighbors in taking greater care to stop the spread of the virus, and today's announcement will allow us to take those efforts to the next level and beyond."

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