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**MAYOR DE BLASIO AND TASKFORCE ON RACIAL INCLUSION AND EQUITY
ANNOUNCE NEW COVID-19 CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE**

Three new Gotham Health sites will provide comprehensive care to support recovering COVID-19 patients, including pulmonary care, radiologic and diagnostic services, mental health services, and on-site access to medication

NEW YORK—Mayor de Blasio today announced that three “COVID-19 Centers of Excellence” will open in communities of color that have been hardest-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Located in Bushwick, Jackson Heights, and Tremont, the new Gotham Health sites will provide comprehensive outpatient services for recovering COVID-19 patients.

“Our city will not recover until we address the painful disparities laid bare by the COVID-19 crisis,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “The Centers of Excellence will move us forward in our fight for a fair recovery and deliver care to the communities that need it most.”

“The coronavirus pandemic has exposed deeply-rooted health disparities for people of color, and the City must do everything possible to close these gaps,” said **First Lady Chirlane McCray**. “These new COVID-19 Centers of Excellence will ensure that New Yorkers in the hardest-hit neighborhoods, many of whom have sacrificed their health to keep the City running during this crisis, have access to high-quality health care.”

COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on communities of color, with Black and Latino New Yorkers dying around twice the rate of their white counterparts when adjusted for age. According to the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, in sections of Jackson Heights, Queens, approximately 37 percent of people who have been tested for COVID-19 have been positive for the virus. This is also true for approximately 30 percent of people in the Tremont section of the Bronx, and 25 percent of people in Bushwick, Brooklyn.

To support patients recovering from COVID-19, these new Gotham Health Centers will specifically provide pulmonary care, radiologic and diagnostic services, as well as mental health services to help address anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and psychological distress. The sites are projected to open this fall, and will also house retail pharmacies. Patients can be referred to the one of the centers after a hospital visit or through their primary care provider. Positive COVID-19 test results, antibody or not, are not required.

“As the de Blasio administration prepares to reopen New York City, the COVID-19 Centers of Excellence provide the foundation for long-term health recovery in our hardest hit communities,”

said **Dr. Raul Perea-Henze, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services and Co-Chair of the Taskforce on Racial Inclusion and Equity**. “This visionary project represents the commitment of the Taskforce on Racial Inclusion and Equity to address the unacceptable disparities that have been amplified by the pandemic. I thank my co-chairs First Lady Chirlane McCray and Deputy Mayor Phil Thompson and our colleagues for championing this forward-looking approach.”

“One critical way to ensure an equitable recovery from COVID-19 is by providing free or low-cost healthcare and mental health support to communities that are in most need of, but can least afford, these life-saving services,” said **J. Phillip Thompson, Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives and Co-Chair of the Taskforce on Racial Inclusion and Equity**. “These centers will give those living in historically underserved areas the resources they need to physically recover from their illnesses so that they can begin rebuilding their lives once this pandemic is over, not left behind.”

“The global public health community anticipates uncovering the long-term impacts of COVID-19 for generations to come. However, NYC Health + Hospitals is proactively establishing COVID Centers of Excellence to begin caring for those who have already been impacted by this vicious virus,” said **NYC Health + Hospitals President and CEO Mitchell Katz, MD**. “When it comes to the novel Coronavirus, the global medical community is at an unprecedented disadvantage of not knowing all of the facts and what to expect, but New York City won’t wait around to start seeing the long-term health impacts of this pandemic.”

“It is important to address the potential long-term health implications of COVID-19 head on and locally in the communities hardest-hit by this global pandemic,” said **NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham Health CEO Michelle Lewis**. “Following our system’s emphasis on preventative medicine, the new COVID Center of Excellence will proactively track patients’ health and respond medically to ensure every New Yorker under our care is able to live a full and healthy life.”

“At NYC Health + Hospitals, we will continue our commitment to the well-being of every New Yorker, especially in communities that have been hardest hit by COVID-19,” said **NYC Health + Hospitals Senior Vice President of Ambulatory Care Ted Long, MD**. “Our three new COVID Centers of Excellence emphasizes our investment in these communities and all New Yorkers. Our priority is to care for people, where it’s convenient for them and in a personalized manner.”

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