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**NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT'S LATEST 'PREP TALK' PODCAST: A  
RECOGNITION OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

*#PrepTalkNYC* {Click to listen to [episode 62](#)}

**February 18, 2021** — February is Black History Month, a time to celebrate the achievements and contributions African Americans have made in U.S. history. In a year where COVID-19 has disproportionately ravaged minority communities, it has become transparent that inequities continue to plague neighborhoods where black and brown people reside. This harrowing reality has fast-tracked the need for the equitable distribution of resources to those hardest hit by the pandemic. On the latest episode of 'Prep Talk,' Dr. Torian Easterling, first deputy commissioner and chief equity officer at New York City's Health Department, outlines the comprehensive strategies the department have implemented to ensure vulnerable New Yorkers receive fair and equal access to COVID-19 testing and vaccines. Dr. Easterling discusses the importance of leveraging relationships with houses of worships, nonprofits, community boards, and other trusted partners to build connections with wary community members.

"We understand that there is a lack of confidence both in the system as well as in the vaccine," **First Deputy Commissioner and Chief Equity Officer at NYC Health Department Dr. Easterling** said. "Addressing those issues has to be our work as government to ensure that we are earning the trust of New Yorkers and everyday people, so that they know this vaccine is for them."

Dr. Easterling also emphasized the importance of using data to drive decision-making around the response to the health inequities amplified by the pandemic. The data has been integral to contextualizing challenges and advising strategy. You can listen to the latest episode on [SoundCloud](#), [iTunes](#), and [Spreaker](#).

**Profile**

**Dr. Torian Easterling** serves as the first deputy commissioner and chief equity officer at the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Dr. Easterling has spent more than five years in a senior leadership role at the Health Department. Prior to serving as first deputy commissioner and chief equity officer, Dr. Easterling served as deputy commissioner of the Center for Health Equity and Community Wellness where he oversaw programmatic work focused on reducing overall premature mortality and closing the racial gap on the top leading causes of preventable death. He also served as the assistant commissioner of the Health Department Bureau of Brooklyn Neighborhood Health, where he helped advance key programming to address pressing concerns, including maternal deaths and gun violence. Dr. Easterling is a community physician committed to health equity, social justice and movement building to achieve the health outcomes that all people deserve both locally and globally.

Dr. Easterling holds a bachelor's degree from Morehouse College (Atlanta, GA), a doctor of medicine (M.D.) from Rutgers-New Jersey Medical School, and a master's degree in public health (M.P.H) from Icahn School of Medicine at Sinai in New York. He completed his residency in Family Medicine at Jamaica Hospital Medical Center in Queens, NY and a General Preventive Medicine residency at Icahn School of Medicine at Sinai in New York.



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**MEDIA CONTACT:** NYC Emergency Management Press Office (718) 422-4888

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