

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 3, 2020

CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**RECOVERY AGENDA: CITY INVESTS \$20 MILLION TO CREATE PANDEMIC
RESPONSE INSTITUTE, STRENGTHENING LONG-TERM HEALTH
INFRASTRUCTURE**

NEW YORK—Today, Mayor de Blasio announced the creation of the Pandemic Response Institute (PRI), a facility dedicated to preparing New York City and other jurisdictions for future health emergencies and epidemics. PRI will strengthen New York City’s health infrastructure, build on the success of the Pandemic Response Lab and recent experiences in epidemic response, and position the City as a global leader in research, innovation, and pandemic response.

This effort is part of the Administration’s long-term recovery agenda, which seeks to accelerate the City’s economic recovery by building on the network of premier hospital systems, world leading medical universities, and growing life sciences and tech sectors to make New York City the public health capital of the world.

“The Pandemic Response Institute will establish New York City as a global leader in public health training, research, and management,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “No city in the county has sacrificed more, or worked harder to keep COVID-19 at bay. It’s time to put those lessons to work – and move forward with bold ideas to keep New Yorkers healthy and jump-start our economic recovery.”

The City has identified an initial space at the Alexandria Center for Life Science to house the Pandemic Response Institute as it starts up and will aim to select an operator by mid-2021, with the goal of opening PRI by the end of 2021.

PRI will advance research, training, and innovation on outbreak detection, investigation, and management. Specifically, it will focus on the following areas:

- Building new technologies and systems that detect, track and monitor health issues, particularly those that signal vulnerabilities to disease outbreaks.
- Advancing research on cutting-edge diagnostics and therapeutics, as well as the latest science on outbreak modeling.
- Training public health, business, and community leaders in all aspects of pandemic prevention and management, and the roles that they each can play in future health emergencies.
- Piloting new community-based partnership models that build local-level health infrastructure, improve emergency preparedness, and advance health outcomes across all communities.

Given the critical importance of laboratory diagnosis to tracking COVID-19 and safely re-opening the city, the near-term home of PRI will be near the Pandemic Response Lab. This investment will strengthen the city's health infrastructure and allow for important collaboration as PRI advances research and new innovations related to outbreak detection, investigation, and management.

The City will also convene a meeting in early 2021 to gather insights and expertise from public health and community leaders to inform PRI's design and priority activities.

"Investing in public health is critical, both to ensure that the City is as well prepared as possible for the next health emergency and to help spur the City's economic recovery," said **Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development Vicki Been**. "The Pandemic Response Institute builds on our existing health expertise, deep and diverse talent pool, and premier academic, research and innovation institutions to position New York City at the forefront of emergency response and preparedness, while also pioneering models to improve community health and health equity and fostering good-paying jobs in the life-sciences industry."

"Public health is an investment, not a cost," said **Senior Advisor Dr. Jay Varma**. "It's an investment in our physical safety, our economic prosperity, and in justice, ensuring that health and opportunity are available to all. The Pandemic Response Institute will strengthen the City's resilience and help position it as the public health capital of the world."

"Creating a stronger city means investing in our health infrastructure and ensuring we're prepared for the next health crisis," said **James Patchett, president and CEO of New York City Economic Development Corporation**. "This institute will not only position New York City as a leader in pandemic response, it will foster research and partnerships that improve health outcomes across the five boroughs, drive innovations that advance public health, and develop the City's talent pool so we remain a hub for life sciences and public health for years to come."

"The lessons we've learned during the COVID-19 pandemic – and other health emergencies – must inform future responses," said **Health Commissioner Dr. Dave A. Chokshi**. "New York City can harness its expertise to serve the nation with this center for training and research."

"The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated just how essential it is for New York City to invest in public health programs and develop effective strategies to confront future pandemics," said **U.S. Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney**. "The Pandemic Response Institute (PRI) will position our city as the global leader in pandemic preparedness and research. I am excited to work with PRI as this investment in our people and in our future benefits New York City for years to come."

"As the Borough President for the county that has the greatest health disparities, I am encouraged to see a concrete plan for a long-term recovery," said **Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.** The Pandemic Response Institute shows the forward thinking of New Yorkers and a crucial investment that will benefit all of our residents. A stronger healthcare infrastructure builds resilience and capacity for improving health outcomes in this pandemic, and an informed, more strategic approach to any future health crises."

“In the midst of a pandemic, the EDC created testing labs, including in my district, to allow for more timely COVID-19 results,” said **Council Member Keith Powers**. “Strengthening this infrastructure prepares us for a more timely recovery, while creating a major economic opportunity for the city. Thank you to the Mayor and the EDC for your work on this institute.”

"Building on knowledge gleaned during the COVID-19 pandemic response, enhancing our health infrastructure and activating local talent are key components that will inform New York City's future public health response procedures and partnerships," said **Council Member Paul Vallone, Chair of the Economic Development Committee**. "Combining all of these factors is the Pandemic Response Institute, which will help drive both health sector innovation and critical economic growth in the five boroughs for years to come."

"With the COVID-19 pandemic growing increasingly fast this winter, it's critical that New York continues to be a leader in pandemic response and preparedness. By partnering with community-based organizations and building a local level health infrastructure, the Pandemic Response Institute can help begin to address the systemic inequities in our healthcare system that have made the virus's impact so severe while preventing future waves and other pandemics as well. I'm especially proud that the Pandemic Response Institute will find its home so close to District 2, and I look forward to its launch," said **Council Member Carlina Rivera**.

“As New Yorkers continue working together to respond to and recover from COVID-19, it’s imperative that we simultaneously prepare for future health emergencies, said **Julie Samuels, Executive Director, Tech:NYC**. “By taking advantage of New York’s unique position as a global epicenter for both medical and technological research, as well as the unmatched talent our city continuously attracts and develops, the Pandemic Response Institute will help us build a stronger and safer future.”

“Over the last 10 months, we have seen COVID-19’s impact on New York, disproportionately affecting low-income communities and communities of color,” said **Joey Ortiz, Executive Director of the NYC Employment and Training Coalition**. “Our most vulnerable neighbors to the virus were also the ones in danger of losing their jobs and livelihoods. It is critical that recovery efforts tie in public health with economic relief. The Pandemic Response Institute will establish a leading institution to increase preparedness to public health emergencies with a focus on health equity. We need to consider the social determinants that put our communities at risk to protect their health, their jobs, and the ability to support their families.”

###