



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
AND MENTAL HYGIENE**  
Dave A. Chokshi, MD, MSc  
*Commissioner*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES NEW MEMBERS OF THE NYC BOARD OF HEALTH**

*Dr. Simona C. Kwon and Dr. Sidney Hankerson join the New York City Board of Health*

**September 27, 2021** — The Health Department has announced two new members to the New York City Board of Health, which is responsible for the enactment of the New York City Health Code and enacts policies that promote the health of New Yorkers.

“With the appointment of Dr. Simona Kwon and Dr. Sidney Hankerson to the Board, I can truly say that the people of our city will be in good hands and good health,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**.

“The New York City Board of Health has a sterling legacy of taking bold actions to protect and promote the health of our city,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Dave A. Chokshi**, who serves as chair of the Board. “We are excited by the leadership that Dr. Kwon and Dr. Hankerson will bring to the Board and we know our city will be healthier thanks to their expertise.”

Mayor Bill de Blasio appointed Dr. Simona C. Kwon and she was confirmed by the New York City Council on Thursday, September 23.

Dr. Kwon is an Associate Professor and Vice Chair for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Department of Population Health at NYU Grossman School of Medicine. She also serves as the director of NIH National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities-funded Center of Excellence, the NYU Center for the Study of Asian American Health. Dr. Kwon is a social-behavioral epidemiologist whose research has focused on social and cultural factors that influence health and health outcomes in racial and ethnic and immigrant communities with a core focus on advancing health equity in research, policy and practice.

**Dr. Kwon** said, “I am looking forward to the privilege of working with my colleagues on the Board to monitor and assess impact, and ensure inclusion and reach of health promotion and disease prevention programs, services and policies to protect the health and safety for all New Yorkers.”

Dr. Sidney Hankerson was also appointed as Chair of the Community Services Board of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, which holds an *ex officio* seat on the Board of Health.

“In the wake of COVID 19, a mental health crisis has engulfed our City,” said **Dr. Hankerson**. “I am excited to work with Deputy Commissioner Chinazo Cunningham on the Community

Services Board and Health Commissioner Chokshi on the Board of Health to support the mental health of all New Yorkers. I express sincerest gratitude to Mayor de Blasio for the honor to serve in this capacity.”

Dr. Hankerson is Co-Director of the Columbia Wellness Center, Associate Professor of Psychiatry at Columbia University Irving Medical Center, and Adult Psychiatrist at the New York-Presbyterian Charles B. Rangel Community Health Center. His research focuses on reducing racial/ethnic disparities in mental health treatment. He is a nationally recognized expert at faith-based mental health services research.

The 11-member New York City Board of Health promotes and protects the health of all New Yorkers. Nine members are appointed by the Mayor with the advice and consent of the City Council and serve six-year terms, while the Health Commissioner and Chair of the Community Services Board serve ex officio. Each Board member is a recognized expert, and the group represents a broad range of health and medical disciplines.

As the overseer of New York City's Health Code, the Board has enacted countless measures to improve the wellbeing of New Yorkers over the years, including a ban on interior lead paint; modern tuberculosis control provisions; the elimination of trans fat from restaurants; and, more recently, the creation of sodium warning icons for chain restaurants.

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